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AMERICAN JOURNALISM

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- George Seldes: Propaganda Analyst, Press Gadfly
- "The Glorious Publick Virtue so Predominant in Our Rising Country": Benjamin Franklin's Printing Network During the Revolutionary Era
- Madison Misinterpreted: Historical Presentism Skews Scholarship
- The Editor as Politician: W.R. Ronald and the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1913

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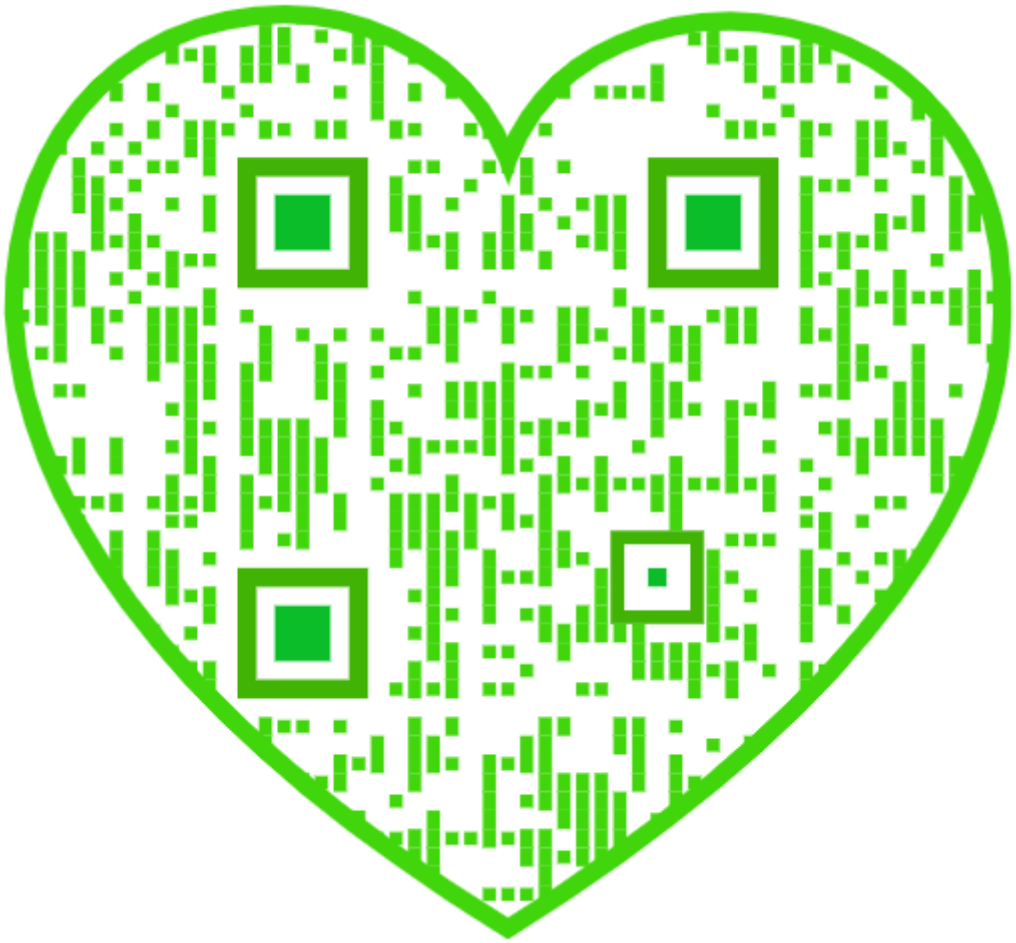

American Journalism

Volume 13 Number 1 Winter 1996

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EDITORIAL PURPOSE. The journal publishes articles, research notes, book reviews, and correspondence dealing with the history of journalism. Such contributions may focus on social, economic, intellectual, political, or legal issues. *American Journalism* also welcomes articles that treat the history of communication in general, the history of broadcasting, advertising, and public relations; the history of media outside the United States; and theoretical issues in the literature or methods of media history.

SUBMISSIONS. Articles, research notes, and correspondence should be sent to Professor Wallace B. Eberhard, Editor, College of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Georgia, Athens 30602-3018. Telephone: (706) 542-3031. FAX: (706) 542-4785. E-mail: CMSEBER@uga.cc.uga.edu. Authors should send four copies of manuscripts submitted for publication as articles. *American Journalism* follows the style requirements of the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th ed. The maximum length for most manuscripts is twenty-five pages, not including tables and footnotes.

All submissions are blind refereed by three readers. The review process typically takes about three months. Manuscripts will be returned only if the author includes a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Research notes typically are four- to eight-page manuscripts, written with less formal documentation. Such notes, which are not blind refereed, may include reports of research in progress, discussion of methodology, annotations on new archival sources, commentaries on issues in journalism history, suggestions for future research, or response to material previously published in *American Journalism*. Authors who wish to contribute research notes are invited to query the editor.

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From the Editor's Desk...

"IN BOOKS LIES THE SOUL OF the whole Past Time," said Thomas Carlyle, "the articulate audible voice of the Past, when the body and material substances of it has altogether vanished like a dream." We devote a goodly share of our lives as academics to contributing to that "Past Time" in books, articles, lectures and conference papers. In this journal, the book review section has run from fifteen to twenty pages, with commentary on as many books. Indeed, we suspect many readers turn to that section before anything else, as certainly as the editor turns to the report of the Atlanta Braves' game in his morning *Atlanta Constitution* before beginning at the beginning of that newspaper. Or, if readers find none of the research articles tickling their intellectual fancy, the book reviews invariably will offer insight into what's new in media history book publishing. Those book reviews do not, of course, just happen, like snow and spring and the start of a new quarter or semester.

All of which is prelude to a farewell to Thomas Connery of St. Thomas University, who has been your book review editor for the past two years. His name is reluctantly edited out of our masthead after this issue, but not without appreciation. Our collective dependence on book reviews and those who cause them to be written is immense. The reviews help us know what's new on the bookstore and library shelves, and often provide us all we'll ever know about some niche of media history. There isn't, after all, time to read all the outpouring of new stuff, much as we'd like to (and when would we find time to dip into Anne Perry or Carl Hiaason if we did?). We have never asked Tom how he managed the chore of learning about new books, getting copies for review, finding reviewers, and staying on them until they produce. We have mailed him our editorial deadlines each year, and somehow the reviews show up on time, well edited without interference with what the reviewer wanted to say. The writers of books reviewed sometimes may side with Benjamin Disraeli, who commented: "You know who the critics are? The men who have failed in literature and art." But that is part of the process. However caustic and critical the review, we doubt that many readers are deterred from seeking their own insights about a particular work. Tom and his stable of reviewers are part of the extended editorial staff of this journal. The cliché is that we couldn't do it without them, and it's true. Tom's

replacement is, as you probably know, David Spencer of the University of Western Ontario, London, and we assume the book review editor's book of secrets has been passed on to him across the northern border of the United States. We are grateful to book review editors everywhere for what they do for us. Our special thanks to Professor Connery for a job done so well, carefully, and thoughtfully.

WBE

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We acknowledge below, with gratitude, those who have reviewed manuscripts for this journal over the past year. If your name has been omitted, it is an oversight. Let the editor know so we may include you in our next list.

Norman Sims, University of Massachusetts; Michael Buchholz, Indiana State University; Alf Pratte, Brigam Young University; Stephen Ponder, University of Oregon; Elizabeth Burt, University of Hartford; John M. Coward, University of Tulsa; Philip J. Lane, California State University; Sherilyn Cox Bennion, Humboldt State University; Jan Whitt, University of Colorado; Phyllis Zagano, Boston University; Catherine Cassara, Bowling Green State University; Harvey Strum, Sage / Junior College of Albany; Ralph Frasca, University of Toledo; Susan Henry, California State University; Julie Hedgepeth Williams, Samford University; David Abrahamson, Northwestern University; Donna Allen, Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press; Nathaniel Hong, University of Washington; June Adamson, emeritas, University of Tennessee; Ernest Hynds, University of Georgia; Mary Ann Weston, Northwestern University; Craig Allen, Arizona State University; Howard S. Pactor, University of Florida; Darwin Payne, Southern Methodist University; Sandra Haarsager, University of Idaho; Roger Simpson, University of Washington; Shirley Biagi, California State University; John DeMott, University of Memphis; Marion Marzolf, University of Michigan; Peggy Kreshel, University of Georgia; Charles Lewis, Mankato State University; Edd Applegate, Middle Tennessee State University; Samuel V. Kennedy, Syracuse University; Daniel W. Pfaff, Penn State University; Dennie Hall, University of Central Oklahoma; Louis Liebovich, University of Illinois; Leonard R. Teel, Georgia State University; Joseph A. Mirando, Southeastern Louisiana University; Eugenia M. Palmegiano, St. Peter's College; Barbara Cloud, University of Nevada; E. Blackwood, Bemidji State University; William J. Ryan, Rockhurst College; Michael Murray, University of Missouri; Donald G. Godfrey, Arizona State University; Ronald Garay, Louisiana State University; William Stone, University of Texas; Gerald

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George Seldes: Propaganda Analyst, Press Gadfly

By Patrick Daley

George Seldes' propaganda criticism, in which he tried to give the public a critical attitude toward news and alert journalists to the need for reform in their profession, has been misplaced within a mass society theory that shows audiences as passive receivers.

From 1911 through the middle of the century, progressive muckrakers produced a body of consistent press criticism. This propaganda analysis,[1] as J. Michael Sproule calls it, attacked economic press royalists who benefited from advertisers' promotion of a consumer mentality, reduced diversity through the rationalization of journalistic routines and conventions, and hindered democratic enlightenment with the publication of corporate and governmental public relations and propaganda as news. Historians of American journalism — Lee, Mott, Emery, and Tebbel — cite propaganda analysts such as Upton Sinclair, Will Irwin, Oswald Garrison Villard, Silas Bent, and George Seldes as highly opinionated and sometimes valuable press critics, but they devote little space to their specific points of view.[2]

This inattention has denied both academicians and the public access to important press criticism and its most consistent theme: the failure of the press to serve the public in its participatory democratic functions. Recent scholarship, however, has resurrected this propaganda analysis and its intellectual foundations from a "distorted memory."[3]

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1. J. Michael Sproule, "Progressive Propaganda Critics and the Magic Bullet Myth," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 6 (1989): 225-246.
2. See Alfred McLung Lee, *The Daily Newspaper in America: The Evolution of a Social Instrument* (New York: Macmillan, 1937); Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism 1690-1960* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 735-737; Edwin Emery, *The Press and America* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. : Prentice-Hall, 1972); John W. Tebbel, *The Compact History of the American Newspaper* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1969).
3. Sproule, "Progressive Propaganda Critics and the Magic Bullet Myth"; James W. Carey, "*Commentary*: Communications and the Progressives," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 6 (1989): 264-282; Hanno Hardt, *Critical Communication Studies: Communication History and Theory in America* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

Hanno Hardt singles out Sinclair, Villard, and Seldes among a rising generation of social critics

> who recalled the problems of commercialism with its enthusiastic response to mass appeals, and dwelt on the lack of freedom in the workplace for journalists and editors. They issued fiery indictments and warned about the dangers of an ailing press for the democratic system, recognizing that the quality of political life depended on the nature of the media system.[4]

Similarly, James Carey and Sproule describe propaganda analysis as marked by its distinctive democratic American pragmatism. Carey situates these press critiques for media scholars and democratic advocates:

> Muckraking and propaganda analysis were an American version of Ideologiekritik but with significant differences from the European counterpart. First, they were framed within an American language of democracy rather than a theory of mass society. Second, they were straightforward, descriptive, and aimed at provoking public action rather than theoretical reflection. Third, and most important, while they were overwhelmingly aimed at unmasking bourgeois ideology, they examined the propaganda efforts of all of the groups, both on the Left and Right, labor unions as well as manufacturers' associations, that were corrupting public discourse by control and manipulation of the press.[5]

Sproule maintains that the progresssive assumptions of the propaganda analysts were not spelled out, but instead, taken for granted. Because their assumptions were largely unarticulated, Sproule maintains that it was easy for behavioral media scholars in the 1940s to articulate propaganda analysis ex post facto under the mythical guise of a functionalist mass society theory.

However, a careful historical reading of propaganda analysis, Sproule contends, will reveal that this work was grounded in an appreciation for a positive, competent, and rational public — not the passive and irrational view of the public underpinning all versions of mass society theory. As Sproule puts it,

> Close scrutiny of the work of the progressive propaganda critics provides little evidence to support what amounts to a mythical remembrance of the origins of mass communication research in the United States. Propaganda critics did not focus on reception of messages by a passive audience but rather

4. Hardt, 66.
5. Carey, 287.

> emphasized the role of institutions in coloring communications given to the public. Far from viewing audiences as passive, alienated, and irrational receivers whose limitations threatened democracy, the propaganda analysts reflected the progressive view that democracy required increased popular participation.[6]

According to Sproule's argument, propaganda analysis has been historically misplaced within a mass society theory in which the masses were said to be powerfully and defenselessly affected by mass media messages. As a consequence of this incorrect fit, Sproule submits that "it may be time to revive the term 'propaganda' as a paradigmatic center for American media criticism. Renewed attention to progressive assumptions about democracy will aid," he adds, "in the shift from narrow questions of whether the media have negative 'effects' and help raise the wider issue of whether, in principle, mass media make acceptable contributions to democratic life."[7]

As a modest response to Sproule's call for a revival of progressive American media criticism, this article examines the propaganda analysis of George Seldes. Seldes' work was firmly lodged in the heyday of propaganda analysis in the 1930s. But prior to this work, Seldes had cut his journalistic teeth in 1909 at a time when muckraking and Progressivism had found common ground in exposure. Hofstadter describes this common ground succinctly:

> The fundamental critical achievement of American Progressivism was the business of exposure...It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the Progressive mind was characteristically a journalistic mind, and that its characteristic contribution was that of the socially responsible reporter-reformer.[8]

While reviewers of Seldes' critical corpus were not always kind, they did agree that he had earned the title as the father of American press criticism.[9] His progressive analysis continued after academic progaganda analysis was replaced by the more politically sterile administrative research of the 1940s and 1950s.

This article will focus on Seldes' propaganda analysis of the press as it turned on four continuous and consistent thematic concerns which have enduring relevance for American journalism: (1) the advertising industry's promotion of a consumer mentality in the press, (2) the call for newsroom reorganization in the form of workplace democracy for journalists, (3) the growth of chain ownership in the media, and the impact of corporate and state public relations counseling and propaganda on the news product, and (4) the reduction and homogenization

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6. Sproule, 226.
7. Ibid., 242.
8. Herbert Gans, *Deciding What's News* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 244, citing Richard A. Hofstadter, *Age of Reform* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), 85.
9. Marion Marzolf, *Civilizing Voices* (New York: Longman, 1991), 142.

of democratic voices through the newsgathering routines and conventions of commercial journalism.

The article begins with an overview of the personal influences which shaped Seldes' political and social consciousness. It then locates and examines these four persistent themes of press criticism in eight central books which Seldes authored between 1929 and 1953. These books drew heavily upon his journalistic career, beginning with the *Pittsburgh Leader* in 1909 and ending with the foreign news service of the *Chicago Tribune* in 1929. Although the themes are examined in the order listed above, the analysis will necessarily overlap at times in order to adhere to Seldes' goal of moving from particular criticisms to public enlightenment and journalistic reform. As Sproule puts it, when

> Seldes gave examples of corrupt news reporting, his endeavor was both to help the public assume a critical attitude toward the news and also to alert journalists to the need for reforms in their profession...(for) propaganda analysts saw their social contribution as one of identifying whose interests were being served by the media, why, and with what ethical implications for democratic social progress.[10]

Influences on Seldes' Political Consciousness

Seldes championed the cause of the underdog and believed that the liberating potential of industrialism had been subverted by economic royalists who had enslaved the citizenry. He believed the press could be a reformist force in redressing these unfair conditions. Seldes wrote that while the press

> could be the most powerful force in making this country over into an industrial democracy in which poverty would be unknown, wealth equitably distributed, every man certain of the minimum requirements of decent living, (it) has, on the contrary, become the most powerful force against the general welfare of the majority of the people.[11]

Seldes acquired his faith in the fundamental worth of human beings and his belief in the plasticity of human nature from the anarchistic utopianism of his father, founder of a utopian town in New Jersey, who corresponded regularly with Prince Kropotkin and Count Tolstoy, who were among the prime theoreticians for anarchy in late nineteenth century Russia. While Seldes would become an ardent supporter of the social welfare policies of FDR's New Deal, his ideal political system, adopted from his father, was an intellectual antecedent

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10. Sproule, 239.
11. George H. Seldes, *The Facts Are; A Guide to Falsehood and Propaganda in the Press and Radio,* (New York: In Fact, Inc., 1942), 24-25.

of classical liberalism. Hence, he maintained, "I believe that government is best which governs not at all; and when men are prepared for it, that will be the government which they will have."[12]

When Seldes began writing popular books in 1929, the economic problems facing the country called for political action beyond the laissez-faire freedoms of classical liberalism. As historian William Leuchtenburg put it:

> The crisis of the Depression dissipated the distrust of the state inherited from the eighteenth century and reinforced in diverse ways by the Jeffersonians and Spencerians...In the 1930s, nineteenth century individualism gave ground to a new emphasis on social security and collective action.[13]

Seldes' paradoxical emphasis on freedom from government and his championing of the underdog can be explained by three factors. First, at least early on, he tended to separate politics from economics. His attachment to laissez-faire freedoms can be seen as primarily applicable to freedom of thought and expression. With regard to his New England upbringing, Seldes said, "Anyone who was taught from childhood to be a nonconformist, a libertarian, and a free thinker was sure to be in trouble most of his adult days."[14] With respect to economics, Seldes clearly understood that a laissez-faire approach would simply serve to reinforce the inequitable distribution of wealth. Second, the nature of American journalism with its emphasis on immediacy and deadline pressure left him with little time to philosophize about larger questions. His years as war and foreign correspondent lent credence to such facile cliches as truth being the first casualty in war and journalism as history on the wing. Writing about his first two decades as a journalist, Seldes notes:

> I had never stopped to consider causes and results. There had been no time...so busy with men and history I had no leisure for questioning or reflecting or reasoning — not until certain days in Vienna in 1926 and 1927, in a city where almost every foreign correspondent bumped his head into the new psychology.[15]

The new psychology Seldes alluded to was that of Dr. Alfred Adler, whom Seldes considered one of the greatest human beings he had ever met. The third factor then incorporates Seldes' affinity for Adler's foundational principle of the "feeling of inferiority" which every human being strives to overcome with Seldes' trenchant attacks on Big Business as the bane of journalism and the foe of labor. His unremitting attacks against the role of Big Business in journalism

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12. George H. Seldes, *Tell the Truth and Run* (New York: Greenberg, 1953), xv.
13. William Leuchtenburg, *The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-1932* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 333, 340.
14. Seldes, *Tell the Truth and Run,* vii.
15. Ibid.

echoed Upton Sinclair's earlier accusations in *The Brass Check.*[16] Louis Filler, noted historian of muckraking, writes that "somewhat more the muckraker of the new times (the thirties) was George Seldes whose foe was big business and what he saw as fascist tendencies." His *You Can't Print That* (1929) reiterated Upton Sinclair's indictment of the kept press.[17] Seldes' classic *Lords of the Press* (1938) charged media magnates with shaping the news to fit their anti-progressive needs and biases.[18]

Seldes saw himself as aiding those who occupied the lower rungs of society to overcome their "feelings of inferiority." However, this assistance was motivated by more than psychological affinity for the underdog: Seldes was driven by social and moral reasons. He provided a glimpse of his deep social conscience when he asked: "Was there also compulsion those past decades for speaking and writing not out of partisanship, but out of a feeling of simple justice for the small, the weak, the minority, the voiceless, the disinherited?"[19] His answer, of course, was in the affirmative.

Just who society's unfortunates were was not always clear. For Seldes, the minority sometimes seemed to include the majority of Americans. Here, his pro-union beliefs, fired by the well-known, anti-union stance of the vast majority of American newspapers in the 1930s, led Seldes to adopt idealized notions of the working class. He dedicated *Lords of the Press* to the American Newspaper Guild and chastised the American Newspaper Publisher's Association for fighting labor, holding secret meetings, and campaigning against the New Deal.[20] His avowed disdain for partisanship and his oft-stated principle of "letting the facts speak for themselves" often resulted in disingenuous conclusions offered as unadorned facts. For example, he wrote:

> The fact is pretty well-established that labor is America and America is labor, as Philip Murray stated, and the fact ought to be established that the man who says he loves America and hates labor is a liar, as Abraham Lincoln put it. It is true that we who work for a living are America, and I hope I have established it as a fact in the preceding chapters that those who hate labor (and are therefore the real enemies of America) which I have named; and the main power which creates hatred of labor and therefore is the most un-American force in America, is the press.[21]

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16. See Upton Sinclair, *The Brass Check; a Study of American Journalism* (Pasadena, Calif.: 1919).
17. Louis Filler, *Appointment at Armageddon: Muckraking and Progressivism in the American Tradition* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976), 390-391.
18. Sproule, "Progressive Propaganda Critics and the Magic Bullet Myth," 230.
19. Seldes, *Tell the Truth and Run,* xi.
20. Marzolf, *Civilizing Voices,* 141.
21. Seldes, *The Facts Are,* 122.

True to the impulses of progressivism, Seldes saw solutions to the problems of democracy as more democracy. But, while mass democracy was a relatively new phenomenon, apathy was not. He wrote that even among the eleven million who belonged to unions, many still did not realize that unionization is a way to a great democracy and a more democratic America.[22]

More democracy for Seldes meant an expansion of the public sphere, including opening up the newsroom to greater employee participation. Sproule contends that "propaganda critics such as George Seldes were realists who understood that an open society prevented total success for the 'lords of the press and their hired writers and the big business sponsors of radio oracles.'"[23]

Early in his journalistic career, Seldes learned from experience and from a pioneering propaganda critic how reporters were "innocently" trained to write in conformity with the imperatives of a capitalist press. Seldes credits Will Irwin's series in *Collier's* in 1911 on "The American Newspaper" with educating him out of his naive clubhood.[24] Upton Sinclair's *Brass Check* and Walter Lippmann's *Liberty and the News* provided him with further evidence. For example, Seldes said that he concurred with Lippmann who "wrote that the crisis in democracy is a crisis in journalism and (I agree) that 'those who think the sole cause is corruption are wrong.'"[25]

Advertising, Capital, and Press Corruption

Seldes' agreement with Lippmann, though, was equivocal. While he did not want to lay the blame for the ills of journalism on some omnibus cause, he did write that the press was corrupt because of certain forces working against a free press — financial, social, political, advertising.[26] He dated the Age of Corruption — when the American press could be labeled wholly corrupt — to 1920. He explained this corruption succinctly:

> The charge against advertising, in brief, is this: that it has become the medium of corruption of the press. It now represents all that is evil in this world...the press that attacked Franklin Roosevelt was motivated largely by the desire to preserve the financial interests of the two hundred industrial and fifty financial families which own and rule America. The economic royalists whom Roosevelt denounced (but whom he in reality was saving from destruction) are also the large advertisers. The economic-financial system which Roosevelt was preserving by instituting mild reforms is also the system which controls public opinion through press and radio.[27]

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22. Ibid.
23. Sproule, 236.
24. George H. Seldes, *Freedom of the Press* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1935), 19.
25. Ibid., xi.
26. Ibid.
27. Seldes, *The Facts Are,* 34.

The ideological implications of Seldes' charge led some of his critics to dismiss him, lumping him derisively in the so-called conspiracy camp of Upton Sinclair. The somewhat sympathetic New Yorker critic, A.J. Liebling, described Seldes "as being as subtle as a collapsing house, but nevertheless a useful citizen."[28] He added that he thought Seldes treated errors as lies, and lies as a deliberate, universal conspiracy among publishers — the press lords.[29] Similar criticisms have been offered by some communication scholars who have charged Seldes with sharing Sinclair's belief that conspirators manipulate the press to their own ends.[30] Not only did Seldes quote Sinclair approvingly for their shared progressive, democratic assumptions, but he also sought to soften the blows directed at Sinclair. In a 1980 speech, Seldes said that while Sinclair had great influence among newspapermen because of his integrity, his press naiveté came from his lack of newspaper experience and this led to some misunderstandings.[31]

Seldes believed that the press used these misunderstandings and Sinclair's harsh language to undermine his major thesis. He believed that the press used this same tactic to discredit his work. Seldes charged:

> This is the same trick *(falsum in unum, falsum in omnium)* which venal, corrupt, and brass check book reviewers used against Upton Sinclair's *Brass Check* and against all my books from the day I began criticizing advertising. False in one thing, false in everything is a crooked way of judgment.[32]

However, on one score their critics were undoubtedly right — by always trying to find corruption in the press, both Sinclair and Seldes failed to realize that the institution of journalism did not need to be corrupt to accomplish the ends which their criticisms deplored. Nevertheless, by honing in on the so-called corrupting influences of the press lords, Seldes was able to make valuable suggestions toward alternative press models which assailed property rights and implied worker control and management.

Newsroom Reorganization as a Means to a Democratic Press

Seldes' attitude toward the controlling interests of the press lords is exemplified by a chapter in *Lords of the Press* entitled "Let Newspapermen Run the Newspapers." Under practical suggestions, Seldes said, "if papers remain

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28. See Edmund M. Midura, "An Evaluation of A.J. Liebling's Performance as a Critic of the Press," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1969), 44.
29. Ibid.
30. Theodore Peterson, Jay Jensen, and William Rivers, *The Mass Media and Modern Society* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. 1965), 44.
31. Seldes made this remark during a speech honoring him for his work as a distinguished press critic. The award for professional excellence was given by the Qualitative Studies Division of the Association for Education in Journalism convention at Boston University in August, 1980.
32. Seldes, *The Facts Are,* 35.

private property, there is no chance for working men to make demands of the owners."[33] While most working journalists might not have come from the working class, Seldes cannot be faulted for advocating a more democratic and autonomous newsroom. Throughout his writings, he remained a consistent advocate of worker control of the newsroom. He believed that the economic freedom of working journalists would insure their spiritual freedom as well and the result would be a quantum improvement in journalism as a whole.[34] In *Freedom of the Press*, Seldes wrote:

> In no other industry is the employee as capable of directing the whole works as in newspaper making today...The less policy the freer the newspaper. If this kind of policy direction by the owners of the press were completely abolished and the journalists whose policy would be merely to publish the news came into control, then the day of the free press would be at hand.[35]

Seldes never clearly discussed what worker control might entail, nor did he think that the day for such a change was necessarily at hand, but the advent of the Newspaper Guild gave him some cause for hope. Forty-one years later, in his autobiographical book, *Even the Gods Can't Change History*, Seldes discussed various schemes of employee ownership past and present and acknowledged the growing demand for more democracy in journalism.[36]

Except for his views on the evils of advertising and fascism, Seldes' dictum of just letting the facts speak for themselves resulted in his reluctance to frame his views on theoretical grounds. However, he frequently sidestepped this dictum by quoting someone else. Thus, Seldes praised William Allen White for being "unique among publishers in admitting that the press is not only commercial but a part of the ruling capitalist world."[37] Furthermore, Seldes said, White came to the crux of the newspaper problem:

> Capital today or tomorrow always has a lively sense of its own advantage. Capital is instinctively for all the noble intentions of us capitalists, class conscious. It is that class consciousness which is discrediting the press of the world today, particularly the press of the English-speaking democracies...The sense of property goes thrilling down the line. It produces a slant and a bias that in time becomes — unconsciously and probably in all honesty is — a prejudice against any man or anything or any

33. George H. Seldes, *Lords of the Press* (New York: J. Messner, Inc., 1938), 382.
34. Seldes, *Freedom of the Press*, 358.
35. Ibid., 36.
36. See George H. Seldes, *Even the Gods Can't Change History* (Secaucus, N.J.: Lyle Stuart, Inc., 1976), 315-317.
37. Seldes, *Lords of the Press*, 276-277.

> cause that seriously affects the right, title, and interest of any other capital, however invested.[38]

These familiar indictments were clear calls for drastic changes, but Seldes admitted befuddlement as to what could be done. While he realized that the economically depressed conditions of the 1930s called for collective action, his philosophy of individualism prevented him from joining any cohesive social movement or party. Even though the press sometimes maligned or red-baited him, Seldes explained that

> it would have been impossible for me ever to become a member of the Communist Party or any party having iron discipline, forcing one into a fixed and rigid, unbreakable, and unbendable program, directing its followers on how to live and breathe and speak. Non-conformity, individualism, were in my behavior pattern, if not my bloodstream.[39]

Despite his openness to radical change, Seldes' nonconformist attitude often prevented his clear articulation of a philosophy for journalistic change other than his progressive rule that the more social institutions were democratized, the better off all would be. As he put it, "in the end, newspapers cannot be free, absolutely free in the highest and best sense, until the whole social and economic structure of American life is open to the free interplay of democratic processes."[40]

Press Monopoly, Propaganda, and Public Relations

As Seldes saw it, the pressure for profits induced the press to skew public opinion compatible with the advertising interests of Big Business. If the social and economic structure of American life needed changing, you would never know it, Seldes contended, from the perspectives espoused by the country's press.

In his words, "There is only one viewpoint which the entire press of the nation expresses, respects, represents and works for: the viewpoint of business, money, wealth, and power by what is generally known as the God of Things As They Are, or the Status Quo."[41] Perpetuation of the status quo, then, for Seldes, meant that two hundred industrial and fifty financial families run the country, manifesting their control through the American Newspaper Publishers' Association.

Seldes advised both the good journalist and the good reader to detect propaganda by making it a habit to "look for the economic interest — look for the money back of everything. It is not an all-inclusive rule, because many of the

38. Ibid.
39. Seldes, *Tell the Truth and Run,* xxiv.
40. Seldes, *Lords of the Press,* 279.
41. Seldes, *The Facts Are,* 8.

worst things man has done throughout history have been motivated by other forces..."[42] He saw economic interest as the direct, formative influence manifesting ideological control over public thought.

For Seldes, the commonplace progressive use of the term plutocrat had its complement in "plutogogue," a neologism he credited to Dr. T.V. Smith, professor of philosophy at the University of Chicago. A plutogogue, Seldes said, is the public relations counsel for the wealthy — "hired prostitutes of big business" and the enemy of the people.[43] By the late 1920s public relations had become professionalized with its own organizations. Furthermore, public relations coursework had achieved academic sanction in the curriculum at Columbia University by 1929.[44]

Seldes used the term propaganda both politically and economically. His pejorative economic usage was directed to the new "consumeristic ethic." He contended that these propagandistic economic messages were pragmatic necessities of our new social and economic system, geared as it was to production for consumption rather than utility. Under this system, he maintained, human rights fell victim to property rights.

Politically, Seldes trained his critical sights on the heated atmosphere of World War I and its aftermath in which it was common for the American press to employ, indiscriminately, in its headlines and news stories, pointed terms such as radical, liberal, socialist, anarchist, and Bolshevist or Red. According to Seldes, newspapers used these tactics frequently, and with impunity, for they had no Red advertisers who might object.[45] Seldes was also an implacable foe of propaganda's counterpart, censorship. Even during war, Seldes believed that censorship had limited value. He thought it was usually ignorant, muddled, stupid, and often harmful. He said that in time of war he would restrict its usage to names, identifications, and troop movements and even then, not for long.[46]

Like other propaganda analysts, Seldes attributed too much power to "great publishers" whose personal involvement and power had already been eclipsed by organizational and professional considerations in the newspaper industry. Any power elite was certainly less hegemonic than Seldes would have had us believe. It has become a truism to contend that any newspaper, whether capitalist or socialist, must set some sort of agenda and then selectively and ideologically present some of those stories from among many. With the capitalist press, the "truths" that emerge are often the ideological product of an upper-middle class socialization process which a wide range of newspaper personnel seldom question.

While Seldes' charges need not be weakened to remain historically cogent and coherent, they would have seemed less sinister and conspiratorial if he had articulated them on solid theoretical grounds. However, as Sproule has

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42. Ibid., 71.
43. Seldes, *Freedom of the Press,* 304.
44. Marzolf, *Civilizing Voices,* 109.
45. George H. Seldes, *Witch Hunt: The Techniques and Profits of Red-Baiting* (New York: Modern Age Books, 1940), 26.
46. Seldes, *Tell the Truth and Run,* 26.

suggested, "Theory enough for the (propaganda) critics was the progressive vision of traditional liberal democracy now dependent upon a corrupt process of communication."[47] Indeed, when Seldes was less polemical and personal, he was sometimes better able to see the subtleties involved. For example, he was fully aware that advertisers' pressures on the press had given way to consumer "needs" molded by the messages of advertising interests. Again, quoting William Allen White, Seldes reiterated that

> It is no longer the advertiser who puts on the pressure. It is not even the boss back of the payroll who begins to quake. It is the whole middle and upperclass structures of society...But off the bat, the newspapers representing the innate conservatism of property interests which crystallize middle class psychology are sometimes unfair in their treatment of men or movements that threaten to disturb property in any form.[48]

Given his warnings about the power of concentrated capital, it is not surprising that he was also quick to point out the dangers of the chain ownership of the Hearsts, Howards, and McCormicks. In addition to these diversity-restricting charges, Seldes was acutely sensitive to the growing pattern of cross-media ownership. He said newspaper owners were aware that radio listeners would cut into the circulation of newspaper readers. Thus, Seldes pointed out that "for the double reason of monopolizing advertising profit and controlling of public opinion, the publishers and editors have been buying up the radio stations."[49] He noted that while the number of stations increases every year the percentage under newspaper ownership or control grew larger proportionately.

Newsroom Conventions, Routines, and Values

Seldes was not a strong critic of the institutionally complex ideological forces that tended to homogenize public voices in the emerging profession of journalism in the 1920s and 1930s. In fact, he acknowledged that he had been chided by a friendly critic for failing to point out that press lords could accomplish their aims by subtle means. He quoted approvingly a *New York Times* critic who described what we would call today "socialization of the news room":

> The real trouble is that news is suppressed before it is made — I mean, suppressed by the mind — never even set down on paper and submitted to an editor. Frequently no one bothers to look into anything which is harmful to advertisers or friends of the newspaper proprietors. This is due to a state of mind. You

47. Sproule, 236.
48. Seldes, *Lords of the Press,* 278.
49. Seldes, *The Facts Are,* 117.

> haven't written about that. It is important. It is the state of the mind of the investigator; but he is the overlooker; I mean, he overlooks news every day...[50]

While Seldes could not have overlooked the fact of newsroom influence, his critical eye, nevertheless, was always on the watch for "corruption" external to the newsroom. For him, news suppression tended to be accomplished by interested persons in authority, not by reporters and city editors who lacked authority.[51] Nevertheless, he did hint at this socialization process in his 1931 book, *Can These Things Be!*, when he maintained that "We (reporters) scent the air of the office. We realize that certain things are wanted, certain things unwanted."[52]

Seldes also held what would be considered today a rather unsophisticated view of objectivity. Placed in historical context, Seldes' appreciation for the unadorned facts was the accepted national standard in the journalistic profession of the 1930s. Faith in the facts not only harmonized "with recommendations of critics looking for the ideal newspaper, but it also suited the scientific spirit of the times and added some measure of respect and seriousness to the emerging profession."[53] Seldes' oft-stated ideal of letting the facts speak for themselves was something he believed could be achieved simply by a reporter's unfettered, magical shoe leather enterprise. He said his ideal newspaper "would have a staff of men who would be out every day looking for the facts and who would never be content with the surface news."[54] His faith in the facts leading to "undistorted communication" was apparently being impeded by publishers and editors for, freedom of the press, he said, meant freedom to print what they wanted to print. His naive view of the news process failed to account for institutional barriers to disinterested news and the now-recognized human inevitability of clothing even the simplest facts in some type of interpretive framework.

At times Seldes' general skepticism dimmed his faith in the "guiding light of objectivity." In *Tell the Truth and Run,* Seldes contended that "we may not know just what truth is, we may doubt that any human being knows or can ever know..."[55] But, undaunted and reminiscent of the Miltonian contest between truth and falsehood, Seldes showed the reader the light with his motto: "...take nothing for granted. If you take nothing for granted and try to find the facts, you will soon be safe from false propaganda; you will recognize propaganda true or false, and you will be able to accept the truth."[56]

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50. Seldes, *Freedom of the Press,* 350.
51. George H. Seldes, *Can These Things Be!* (Garden City, N.Y.: Garden City Publishing Co., 1931), 266.
52. Ibid., 271.
53. See Marzolf, *Civilizing Voices,* 122; Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), 121-159.
54. Seldes, *Lords of the Press,* 399.
55. Seldes, *Tell the Truth and Run,* 286.
56. Seldes, *The Facts Are,* 71.

The People's Press

To counteract commercialism, public relations, and restrictions on journalistic autonomy, Seldes adamantly insisted on the need for an alternative newspaper capable of reaching millions of readers. He expressed futility at publishing in small-circulation radical magazines. Not only must a new press organ reach an audience of millions, he argued, but it should also encourage and solicit their participation. As he put it, "journalism is too important a matter to be left to journalists."[57] Seldes' experience as a foreign correspondent had taught him that reporters who failed to talk to the people wrote stories primarily suited for the eyes of the ambassador. Sources tended to be official or legitimated and thus often did the bidding of these officials. Thus, he believed that bringing more people into the news process heightened the chances of arriving at the truth. Simply put, Seldes said, "Great good changes must come from outside and these will not be forthcoming as long as newspapers remain commercial properties where they maintain the status quo."[58]

Seldes' practical proposals included an endowed press, an adless press, and university presses. However, his progressive reformist instincts rested with the prospects of a labor press. Remember that, for Seldes, America was labor. In 1942, Seldes wrote that he was reduced to one solution for the press problem, and that "is a daily newspaper press owned by its readers, and since it is apparently impossible to organize millions of readers, then I would propose a press owned by organized labor."[59] Specifically, Seldes advocated five daily newspapers published from New York to California with the avowed purpose of exposing every newspaper which is not honest, questioning every dishonest editorial, printing the suppressed, pointing out bias, and in general, righting every wrong.[60] In pursuit of this goal, Seldes had begun publication of a journalism review, *In Fact,* in 1940. This successful newsletter achieved a circulation high of 176,000 three years before ceasing publication in 1950.[61]

Conclusion

Seldes was not surprised that his propaganda analysis was assailed or ignored by the press. His own analyses predicted such treatment. Whatever his shortcomings, though, he ought to be remembered for bringing to the fore so many questions about the media that are current today.

First of all, Seldes loudly reinforced the propaganda critics' contention that a crisis in journalism was a crisis in democracy. He railed against the inimical relationship of Big Business and the press for the dangers it posed to the truth. And he lamented the one-sidedness of the relationship in which the media

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57. Seldes, *Tell the Truth and Run,* 283.
58. Ibid.
59. Seldes, *The Facts Are,* 125.
60. Ibid.
61. Tom Goldstein, *Killing the Messenger: 100 Years of Media Criticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 28; Marzolf, *Civilizing Voices,* 142.

were becoming mere tools of big business, the owners' interests, and advertisers' concerns.

At times his almost formulaic approach to the negative influences of big business and advertising revealed his individualistic ethos. Consequently, his criticism of press lords overemphasized their power and led to the seemingly inescapable conclusion that everything would be just fine if the right socially responsible people were running things. In seeking the right agents of change, he overvalued the younger generation. While Seldes understood that youth alone were insufficient agents for progressive change, he simplistically believed that youth would have no reason to compromise their principles, lacking a stake in property. Seldes clearly believed that the public were not simply passive and manipulable recipients of mass media fare.

Instead, he remained an implacable foe of the advertising industry's promotion of a consumer mentality because of its attempt to reduce citizens to unthinking hedonists. He was also a steadfast opponent of the corporate trend toward chain ownership of the press. And, he exercised a vigorous skepticism when evaluating the news for the corrupting influences of public relations and propaganda. Occasionally, his keen eye focused critical attention on the social and organizational forces impinging on the press and homogenizing the publics' voices, thus foreshadowing the work of later sociologists and providing inspiration for a new generation of press critics, notably, A.J. Liebling, I.F. Stone, Studs Terkel, and Nat Hentoff.[62]

However, as with other propaganda analysts, Seldes did not always clearly apprehend the philosophical ramifications which changed socioeconomic circumstances might bring. Emphasizing facts over theory, Seldes and other propaganda analysts failed to develop an explicit and consistent theory of society in which to enmesh the place of the media. Clearly, as Sproule and Carey have pointed out, propaganda analysts were right to eschew the adoption of European socialist concepts which did not fit the American historical experience. Nevertheless, their piecemeal analysis was not conducive to a far-reaching critical approach and perhaps made them easy victims for revision of their progressive democratic assumptions into the antidemocratic assumptions of mass society theory.

As this analysis has shown, Seldes, too, lacked an explicit and systematic theory of society in which to situate his press critique. While he was never an apologist for the status quo, his tendency to overvalue "straight" facts and individualism left his critique vulnerable to assimilation by a consensus ideology maintaining the status quo. Conversely, his work unintentionally undervalued the social differences manifested by conflicting interests in a complex social environment. To his credit, Seldes sought to accentuate the contributions of the lower middle and working classes to society and, by this publicity, he believed their lot would inevitably be improved. His desire to expand the public sphere implicitly embraced the notion that ideas and knowledge are resources for understanding that ought to be democratically

62. Ibid., 28; Marzolf, *Civilizing Voices,* 142.

shared in order to further people's definition of, and control over, their collective destinies.

However, the failure to explicate a theory of society grounded in concrete historical reality should not be taken as a serious indictment of propaganda analysts whose primary efforts, after all, were "to document how institutional propaganda threatened traditional assumptions of the American polity and, second, to make this evidence available to the public."[63]

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63. Sproule, 231.

'The Glorious Publick Virtue So Predominant in Our Rising Country': Benjamin Franklin's Printing Network During the Revolutionary Era

By Ralph Frasca

During the Revolution, printers assumed the dual roles of sentinel and educator, guarding the public interest while teaching and exhorting colonists to be virtuous. Printer-turned-statesman Benjamin Franklin was a late and somewhat reluctant participant in the American Revolution, but he realized his public commitment to the Patriot cause was essential. However, he counseled his printing partners and associates to remain impartial, fearing financial losses and restraints upon press freedom would otherwise result. Most members of his printing network initially obeyed, but soon became ardent revolutionaries.

One of the greatest achievements of Benjamin Franklin's printing career was his creation of the most prominent and geographically extensive organization of printer-publishers in early America. The Franklin printing network was a loosely-structured organization of business partners, trade associates and family members, which endured from 1729 to the 1790s. Stretching from New England to the West Indies and comprising more than two dozen members, the network altered practices in both the colonial and European printing trades by providing capital to finance printers. As an economic entity and source of mutual support, Franklin's network was integral to the success of many eighteenth century printers and played a vital role in the development of American journalism. As an important mechanism for disseminating Franklin's

ideology of virtue to a mass audience, the printing network was an influential shaper of a national moral character. [1]

Because of its profound economic, political, and moral influence on early American life, it is important to understand how the Franklin network printers sought to influence public perceptions—and how the public in turn influenced that segment of the press—during the American Revolution. Less obvious, but equally important, is the consideration of how Franklin sought to influence individual printers' prudential judgments about the appropriate course of action to take during this turbulent era, which began with Parliamentary passage of the Stamp Act.

During and immediately following the Stamp Act crisis of 1765-66, Benjamin Franklin's political opponents continued the attacks on his character that had resulted in his defeat in his 1764 Pennsylvania Assembly re-election bid. They claimed that while he was in England serving as a colonial agent for the Assembly, Franklin promoted passage of the detested Stamp Act for the personal gain of himself and his friends. Pennsylvania merchant James Pemberton notified Franklin of "the charge industriously propagated of thy being a promoter of the Stamp Act,"[2] and Philadelphia printer David Hall warned Franklin that many people believed he took an active role in devising the tax.[3] The allegation was sufficiently persuasive to result in a mob threatening to attack Franklin's house as well as the residence of John Hughes, whom Franklin had recommended to be the province's stamp distributor.[4]

Not only did Franklin not create the tariff, he went to the greatest lengths within the political system to rescind it. "I never in my life labored any point more heartily than I did that of obtaining repeal," he informed one correspondent.[5] Franklin wrote numerous essays in the British press, and petitioned members of Parliament to reconsider the prudence of the tax. "I was extremely busy attending members of both Houses, informing, explaining,

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1. For more on the Franklin network, see Ralph Frasca, "From Apprentice to Journeyman to partner: Benjamin Franklin's Workers and the Growth of the Early American Printing Trade," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 114 (April 1990): 229-48; Idem, "Benjamin Franklin's Printing Network," *American Journalism* 5 (Summer 1988): 145-58; Idem, "The Virtue of the Art: Benjamin Franklin's Printing Network and the Moral Aspiration of the Early-American Press" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1994). For the argument that Franklin's network was a shaper of a national moral character, see ibid., especially the conclusion chapter.

2. James Pemberton to Benjamin Franklin, 5 May 1766, in Leonard W. Larabee, et al, eds., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* 29 vols. to date (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959-), vol. 13, 261 (hereafter *PBF)* . On damage to Franklin's reputation during the 1764 Assembly political campaign, see J. Philip Gleason, "A Scurrilous Colonial Election and Franklin's Reputation," *William and Mary Quarterly* 18 (January 1961): 68-84.

3. Franklin to David Hall, 6 and 14 September 1765, *PBF,* vol. 12, 259 and 267.

4. Joseph Galloway to Franklin, 20 September 1765, *PBF*, vol. 12, 269-70; Deborah Franklin to Franklin, 20 September 1765, *PBF*, vol. 13, 429.

5. Benjamin Franklin to Daniel Wister, 27 September 1766, *PBF*, vol. 13, 429.

consulting, disputing, in a continual hurry from morning to night."[6] At his most culpable, Franklin was guilty of installing his friends as stamp distributors, but this constituted merely the peccadillo of nepotism, rather than the motive for helping to create the despised Stamp Act.[7]

The accusation that Franklin was an architect of the Stamp Act was repeated in the Pennsylvania press and Assembly. *Pennsylvania Journal* proprietors William and Thomas Bradford published "An ESSAY, Towards discovering the Authors and Promoters of the memorable STAMP ACT" which branded Franklin as the chief architect.[8] After Parliament repealed the tax, Assemblyman Joseph Galloway informed Franklin that Pennsylvania Chief Justice William Allen "publickly Asserted in the House that you were the greatest Enemy to the Repeal of the Stamp Act, of all the Men in England."[9] Trying to seem unruffled by the defamatory allegations, Franklin wrote to Hall, "It shall be my Endeavour, with God's Help, to act uprightly; and if I have the Approbation of the Good and Wise, which I shall certainly have sooner or later, the Enmity of Fools and Knaves will give me very little Concern.[10]

Maintaining his good name was essential to Franklin's success as a statesman and purveyor of principled teachings to a mass audience. As an emerging political leader and moral bellwether in colonial America, Franklin had a vested interest in guarding the sanctity of his reputation. As "Poor Richard" noted, "Glass, china, and reputation are easily cracked and never well mended."[11] Concomitantly, though, he feared appearing to have descended from his moral high ground, thus undermining his credibility as a proponent of public virtue, if he habitually responded to attacks on his character. From his earliest years in journalism, Franklin advocated repaying evil with good and not responding in kind to vicious actions.[12] He claimed there was no need for him to defend himself against "base Calumnies" because his friends were acquainted with his character "and Time will open the Eyes of others."[13] During the hotly-contested Assembly elections of 1764, Franklin told a correspondent, "I bore the personal

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6. *PBF.*

7. The allegation that Franklin supported the Stamp Act so that he and his friends could profit from it is contained in a biased, bitter letter from John Holt. See John Holt to William Goddard, 26 February 1778, Book Trades Collection, American Antiquarian Society.

8. *Pennsylvania Journal,* 18 September 1766.

9. Joseph Galloway to Benjamin Franklin, 1 June 1766, *PBF,* vol. 13: 295.

10. Franklin to David Hall, 14 September 1765, *PBF*, vol. 12, 268. Several years earlier, when Franklin's reputation was under attack by political opponents, he wrote Galloway that "the Cannon and Small Arms" of his political adversaries "consist of great and little Calumnies and Falshoods." Franklin to Galloway 10 June 1758, *PBF*, vol. 8, 96-97.

11. Frances Barbour, comp., *A Concordance to the Sayings in Franklin's Poor Richard* (Detroit: Gale, 1974), 81.

12. "From the Casuist: A Case of Conscience," *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 3 July 1732. The views in Franklin's essay were clearly influenced by the-apostle Paul's writings in the New Testament. See Romans ch. 12, 17-21.

13. Benjamin Franklin to David Hall, 14 September 1765, *PBF*, vol. 12, 267.

Abuse of five scurrilous Pamphlets, and three Copperplate Prints, from the Proprietary party, before I made the smallest Return."[14]

Franklin's solution to the problem of protecting his reputation without seeming to get his hands dirty in the process was to have others defend his character from attacks. "I seem to have some Right to ask the Care of my Friends, to ... guard my Reputation and Interest," he observed.[15] They did. When two of his London friends received an inquiry regarding Franklin's complicity in the Stamp Act, they replied,

> Benjamin Franklin was so far from proposing the stamp act or joining with it in any manner, that he at all times opposed it, both in word & writing, tho' in vain, as neither his nor any other endeavour cou'd influence the then ministry to relinquish the design.[16]

Another ally, Dutch merchant Daniel Wister, defended Franklin's reputation among the Pennsylvania German population. "I am exceedingly oblig'd to my Friends for the constant Care they take of my Good Name in my Absence in defending it from the Slanders of my Enemies," Franklin wrote to Wister. "Among the rest, I beg you would accept my thankful Acknowledgments for the generous Part you have always taken in that kind Work, and that you will be assured I shall never forget your Kindness."[17]

Members of Franklin's printing network also assisted him by publishing essays that rehabilitated his reputation in the wake of his suspected collusion with Stamp Act proponents in Parliament and lionized him as a cornerstone of American political leadership.[18] Franklin's printing associates throughout the colonies, led by his partner, David Hall, began the process of renovating Franklin's reputation by reprinting his House of Commons testimony advocating repeal of the tax.[19] Hall noted this document was "of great Use to his Character with many, in regard to his being alledged a Friend to the

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14. Franklin to Richard Jackson, 1 September 1764, *PBF*, vol. 11, 329.
15. Benjamin Franklin to Joseph Galloway, 11 April 1757, *PBF*, vol. 7, 179.
16. Henton Brown and John Fothergill to James Pemberton, 8 April 1766, Pemberton Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
17. Franklin to Daniel Wister, 27 September 1766, *PBF*, vol. 13, 429.
18. There are many instances of Franklin network members printing articles and essays designed to rebuild Franklin's wounded reputation. For David Hall, see e.g., *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 25 February, 6 March, 27 March, 10 April, and 1, 8, and 15 May 1766. For Peter Timothy, see, e.g., *South-Carolina Gazette*, 16 June 1766. For William Goddard, see, e.g., *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, 2, 9 16, and 23 February and 9 and 23 March 1767. For evidence that laudatory Franklin articles (now lost) appeared in Henry Miller's *Der Wochentliche Philadelphische Staatsbote* newspaper, see Joseph Galloway to Benjamin Franklin, 7 June 1766, *PBF*, vol. 12, 295-96; Franklin to Daniel Wister, 27 September 1766, *PBF*, vol. 13, 429.
19. *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 18 September 1766; "Examination before the Committee of the Whole of the House of Commons," *PBF*, vol. 13, 124-62.

Stamp Act."[20] Hall also published a signed letter from Galloway calling the Bradfords' journalism partisan and "designed to defame the publick reputations of Doctor Franklin and myself" by suggesting they supported the Stamp Act.[21]

Indeed, Franklin expected this support based on moral imperative. He perceived his social and diplomatic role was so vital that the maintenance of his good reputation was in the public's best interest. Before commencing his service as a colonial agent in London, Franklin instructed Galloway to protect his reputation from "Enemies ... of the Publick" who will "take every Opportunity of injuring me in my Absence."[22]

However, once he was abroad on his diplomatic errand to England, Franklin unwittingly invited public disapprobation by gravely miscalculating the fervor of American resistance to the Stamp Act and other British taxes. He had been deferential toward England, firmly believing it to be a nation under the aegis of a "virtuous young King," George III, a monarch whom Franklin regarded as "the very best in the World and the most amiable."[23] Franklin had dismissed the specter of American independence as being both disagreeable to wealthy colonists and impossible to arrange. He had tried in vain in 1754 to unite the colonies "For Their Mutual Defence and Security, and for Extending the British Settlements in North America," but he found their governments, societies, and interests too disparate.[24] Thus, from Franklin's vantage point, conciliation and compromise were the only viable means of redressing colonial grievances. Accordingly, he desired to play the role of intermediary, whose goodwill, logical reasoning, and innate virtue would bring other virtuous men to agreement. He enjoyed the political process of moderation and negotiation, and detested confrontation and rebellion. Believing the intentions of Parliament to be good and the king to be virtuous, Franklin criticized mob actions during the early years of the revolutionary era. He cautioned, "some Punishment seems preparing for a People who are ungratefully abusing the best Constitution and the best King any Nation was ever blest with."[25] Franklin particularly disdained inciters of civil disorder as being devoid of public virtue and beyond the influence of calm leaders like himself. To Franklin, they were motivated merely by the desire for "Luxury, Licentiousness, Power, Places, Pensions, and Plunder."[26]

However, the Stamp Act and Townshend Acts in the 1760s forced Franklin to become an exponent rather than intercessor and to side with the rabble-rousers he detested. Franklin had been deferential toward England, but the rising tide of American opposition to the Empire's taxes and restraints on

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20. David Hall to William Strahan, 19 August 1766, David Hall Papers, American Philosophical Society.
21. *Pennsylvania Journal, 18* and 25 September 1766; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 25 September 1766.
22. Benjamin Franklin to Joseph Galloway, 11 April 1757, *PBF*, vol. 7, 179.
23. Benjamin Franklin to William Strahan, 19 December 1763, *PBF*, vol. 10, 407.
24. "The Interest of Great Britain Considered," 1760, *PBF*, vol. 8, 87, 90; "The Albany Plan of Union," 10 July 1754, *PBF*, vol. 5, 387.
25. Benjamin Franklin to Mary Stevenson, 14 September 1767, *PBF*, vol. 14, 253.
26. Franklin to John Ross, 14 May 1768, *PBF*, vol. 15, 129.

colonial self-determination threatened to wash away his burgeoning status as the wily American spokesman, unless he sided with the Patriot cause. Thus, despite being regarded "in England of being too much an American, and in America of being too much an Englishman," Franklin turned to the press to plead the American case to British readers.[27] Between 1765 and 1775, he wrote at least 126 newspaper articles supporting the American character and explaining its plight. These essays ranged from the informative to the comical. Using a light touch to "humour them in their own Way,"[28] Franklin jovially defended the quality of American breakfasts, sarcastically responded to a British writer who advocated that martial law be imposed in the colonies, and lampooned British ignorance about North America.[29] "The very Tails of the American Sheep are so laden with Wool, that each has a Car or Waggon on four little Wheels to support and keep it from trailing on the Ground," he claimed, and marveled that "the grand Leap of the Whale ... up the Fall of Niagara is esteemed by all who have seen it, as one of the finest Spectacles in Nature!"[30] In "Rules by Which a Great Empire May Be Reduced to a Small One," Franklin advised, "suppose them always inclined to revolt, and treat them accordingly" and "harass them with novel Taxes."[31] The following year, he proposed "A Method of Humbling Rebellious American Vassals," which called for the castration of American males to stem the rapid population growth in the colonies.[32]

Franklin's intent, as he told his son, was to reveal England's abuse of the colonies "in a short, comprehensive, and striking view, and stated therefore in out-of-the-way forms, as most likely to take the general attention."[33] Franklin used his pseudonymous essays more to ridicule intemperate governmental measures and chastise anti-American sentiment than to offer direct refutation. Responding to a British newspaper essay which denounced the colonists and asserted Parliament's right to tax them, Franklin queried, "the gentle terms of republican race, mixed rabble of Scotch, Irish, and foreign vagabonds, descendants of convicts, ungrateful rebels &c. are some of the sweet flowers of English rhetorick, with which our colonists have of late been regaled. Surely, if we are so much their superiors, we should shew the superiority of our breeding by our better manners!"[34] Even the British press was skewered by

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27. Benjamin Franklin to ?, 28 November 1768, *PBF*, vol. 15, 273.
28. "The Busy-Body," no. 4, in *American Weekly Mercury,* 25 February 1729.
29. "Homespun," 2 January 1766, *PBF*, vol. 13, 7-8; "Pacificus Secundus," 2 January 1766, *PBF*, vol. 13, 5-6; "A Traveller," 20 May 1765, *PBF*, vol. 12, 34-35. A useful discussion of Franklin's journalist essays in England is found in Verner WW. Crane, ed., *Benjamin Franklin's Leters to the Press, 1758-1775* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1950).
30. "A Traveller," 20 May 1765, *PBF*, vol. 12, 34-35.
31. "Rules by Which a Great Empire May Be Reduced to a Small One," 11 September 1773, *PBF*, vol. 20, 389-99;.
32. "A Method of Humbling Rebellious American Vassals," 21 May 1774, *PBF*, vol, 21, 220-22.
33. Benjamin Franklin to William Franklin, 6 October 1773, *PBF*, vol. 20, 437.
34. "N.N.," 28 December 1765, *PBF*, vol. 12, 414.

Franklin. He condemned British writers for advocating war on the colonies and also compared British newspapers to ambassadors, noting that both "are sent abroad to lie, not only for the Benefit of the Publick, but also for that of particular Persons."[35]

On the other side of the Atlantic, Franklin's network printers began the Revolutionary Era emulating their mentor's characteristic circumspection. Hall, an immigrant from Scotland, had always been an American adherent in conflicts between the colonies and England, but he refrained from conveying that bias in the *Pennsylvania Gazette.* This was partly due to his own chary nature, but also due to his fidelity to Franklin's views.[36] In 1765, Franklin applauded Hall's decision not to publish "Spirited Papers against the Stamp Law" and praised his editorial caution with respect to the growing revolutionary sentiment in the colonies.[37] Franklin instructed him to not offend the Pennsylvania Assembly, "whose good Will I would have you by all Means cultivate and preserve."[38] Hall's resolve was waning, though, because "the Clamours of the People increase against me, for my Silence in the Paper" and for causing "an infinite Hurt to the Liberties of the People."[39] Facing the threat of physical and financial harm, Hall acquiesced. Upon repeal of the Stamp Act, he censured England by congratulating Patriot writers, through whose efforts "The Instruments and Abettors of cruel Tyranny and Oppression [have been] branded with just contempt!"[40] After passage of the Townshend Acts, Hall became a vigorous advocate for non importation pacts, labeling colonists who ignored the agreements as enemies of the public. However, his press remained open to pro-British views.[41] His refusal to favor one side of an issue and exclude the other from his newspaper prompted William Franklin to dismiss him as "a meer Snake in the Grass."[42]

Peter Timothy also tried initially to steer a moderate course in his *South-Carolina Gazette*, but met with the same public disapprobation as Hall. Having been "from the most popular reduced to the most unpopular Man in the Province" as a result of his "declining to direct, support and engage in the most violent Opposition," Timothy made the same pragmatic decision as Hall and aggressively supported nonimportation agreements in his colony as an "absolutely necessary, part of the American plan of defence."[43] He printed a pamphlet discouraging the exportation of rice and indigo to Great Britain because "Union ought to be a grand object in all our proceedings," and argued that

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35. "A Friend to Both Countries, " 9 April 1767, *PBF*, vol. 14, 102-07; Franklin, "To the printer," n.d., Franklin Papers, American Philosophical Society.
36. David Hall to Benjamin Franklin, 6 September 1765, *PBF*, vol. 12, 258.
37. Benjamin Franklin to David Hall, 14 September 1765, *PBF*, vol. 12, 268.
38. Franklin to Hall, 10 June 1758, *PBF,* vol. 8, 98.
39. David Hall to Benjamin Franklin, 6 September 1765, *PBF*, vol. 12, 258.
40. *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 17 April 1766.
41. See, e.g., *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 2 June, 7 July, 1768, 20 and 27 July, 3 August, 5 October 1769.
42. William Franklin to Franklin, 13 November 1766, *PBF*, vol. 13, 500.
43. Peter Timothy to Benjamin Franklin 3 September 1768, *PBF*, vol. 15, 200-01;

nonimportation pacts were useless unless they were absolute.[44] Timothy later became an American spy, watching British troop ships in Charleston harbor and filing confidential reports with an American general.[45] Timothy reveled in this role, lauding the infant United States as a "new Empire" borne of "glorious Events." He boasted to Franklin that he alone raised "the Opposition to Tyranny" in his city against "strenuous and indefatigable open and secret Enemies."[46]

Although the feisty James Parker feared "the Impetuosity of my Temper would have plunged me deep one way or the other" into the escalating political tensions on both sides of the ocean, his journalism was cautious.[47] He informed readers of his *New-York Post-Boy* that he would not print an account of a skirmish between British soldiers and New Yorkers, dubbed the "Battle of Golden Hill," until an unbiased one was submitted to him.[48] Parker did print a sanitized account of the Boston Massacre two weeks after it occurred, but never used the inflammatory term "massacre."[49]

Younger printing associates, who had not been so inured by Franklin's prudential admonitions, took less cautious paths into the American Revolution. After ending his partnership with Franklin's trusted cohort Parker, and thus severing his affiliation with the Franklin network, Hugh Gaine enjoyed moderate success publishing the *New-York Mercury*. At one point, Parker expressed envy that Gaine had "new Types, but mine are bad."[50] However, Gaine ultimately suffered public humiliation. During the turbulent years before the war, Gaine had professed allegiance to the Patriots in his newspaper, and when British troops occupied New York in 1776, Gaine acted much like a rebel and fled the city, crossing the Hudson River to Newark, New Jersey, where he resumed publishing. He later decided the American cause was hopeless, returned to British-occupied New York in November 1776 and proclaimed loyalty to Great Britain.[51] "The shattered Remains of the Rebel Army, 'tis said, are got over into the Jersies," the turncoat editor informed readers. "Humanity cannot but pity a Set of poor misguided Men who are thus led on to Destruction, by despicable and desperate Leaders, against every idea of Reason and Duty, and

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44. *Considerations on the Impropriety of Exporting Rice to Great-Britain* (Charleston: Peter Timothy, 1775).
45. Timothy to "The General," 16 and 17 August 1778, Miscellaneous Manuscripts Collection, New-York Historical Society. "The General" to whom Timothy reported may have been General Benjamin Lincoln, who surrendered the city of Charleston to the British in 1780, or General Mordecai Gist. For Lincoln, see "Articles of Capitulation" 12 May 1780, Revolution Collection, Library of Congress. For Gist, see William Pierce to Mordecai Gist, 15 November 1782, Gist Papers, Maryland Historical Society.
46. Timothy to Franklin, 12 June 1777, *PBF*, vol. 24, 155.
47. James Parker to Benjamin Franklin, 22 September 1765,*PBF*, vol, 12, 277.
48. *New-York Post-Boy*, 22 January, 5 February 1770.
49. *New-York Post-Boy*, 19 March 1770.
50. James Parker to Benjamin Franklin 15 July 1766, *PBF*, vol. 13, 344.
51. Alfred L. Lorenz, *Hugh Gaine: A Colonial Printer-Editor's Odyssey to Loyalism* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), 107-17.

without the least Prospect of Success."[52] Gaine's editorial views were reviled and lambasted in newspapers throughout the colonies.

As the war was drawing to a close in 1781, Gaine began to fear persecution for being a Royalist mouthpiece, so he petitioned the New York Assembly to allow him to remain in the state. The petition was granted, but his newspaper was discontinued and he was indicted for "adhering to the Enemies of this State."[53] Gaine's petition rekindled the barbs against him. The most stinging was written by Philip Freneau, who penned "Hugh Gaine's Life" for the *Freeman's Journal* in 1783. Freneau, adopting Gaine's persona, wrote:

> As matters have gone, it was plainly a blunder, But then I expected the Whigs must knock under, And I always adhere to the sword that it longest, And stick to the party that's like to be strongest.[54]

Printing contemporary Isaiah Thomas agreed, noting that "Gaine's political creed, it seems, was to join the strongest party."[55]

John Holt's journalistic posture was one of adherence to American aims, chiefly because he had the support of the New York Sons of Liberty. When he published a pamphlet attacking Royal government in the colony, a grand jury concluded Holt's chief purpose "is to mortify Governor Colden." The grand jury ruled the pamphlet to be "a Scandalous Libel against the Judges, Assembly & Government" and ordered all copies "to be burnt by the Hand of the Common Hangman."[56] Holt feared no personal punishment, though. Having the support of the Sons of Liberty, he felt emboldened to write, "I am not apprehensive of an Indictment, or any Ill Consequence. The presentment it self will be very unpopular."[57] After the British took possession of New York City in 1776, Holt fled upstate to the village of Esopus, where he served as the official printer of the state of New York. Holt dismissed any expectation of editorial impartiality in his *New-York Journal*, stating his desire was to publish only those essays that were "on the right side" of the American struggle.[58] A

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52. *New-York Gazette and Weekly Mercury*, 16 December 1776.
53. Docket, New York Court of General Session, 17 June 1783, Miscellaneous Manuscripts Collection, New York Historical Society.
54. Philip Freneau, "Hugh Gaine's Life," *Freeman's Journal* , 8 January 1783, reprinted in F.L. Pattee, ed., *The Poems of Philip Freneau* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1902), 201-08.
55. Isaiah Thomas, *The History of Printing in America,* Marcus A. McCorison, ed. (New York: Weathervane, 1970), 472-73. Gaine's biographer offered a different interpretation. He claimed Gaine was compelled to revert to the British for financial reasons, because printing in New York would provide a better income for his family than printing a rebel newspaper in Newark. Lorenz, *Hugh Gaine,* 114-17.
56. John Holt to Jared Ingersoll, 3 November 1767, Ingersoll Papers, New Haven Colony Historical Society.
57. Ibid.
58. *New-York Journal,* 3 January 1775.

contemporary printer admiringly observed that Holt "zealously asserted the Cause of Freedom" throughout the American Revolution.[59]

After publishing the *Constitutional Courant,* an anti-Stamp Act screed circulated throughout the American colonies, William Goddard printed in Providence and with Holt in New York, but the twenty-five-year-old network printer fell prey to wanderlust. Mistakenly believing the dissolution of the Franklin-Hall partnership meant they were quitting the business, Goddard traveled to Philadelphia to open a printing shop in November 1766.[60] Upon arriving and finding Hall had taken on a new partner, William Sellers, Goddard was recruited by rising young Pennsylvania politician Joseph Galloway, wealthy Quaker merchant Thomas Wharton, and Franklin's illegitimate son William, the royal governor of New Jersey. The three men were integral members of Franklin's anti-proprietary faction, which opposed the Penn family's proprietorship in the province and sought to replace it with a British governor. The chief complaint concerned the unique, tax-exempt status of the Penn family lands. With the exemption removed, Pennsylvanians might pay lower taxes, which is what the anti-proprietarians wanted. It would also mean a closer affiliation with the King, which was the central fear of the proprietarians.[61]

Galloway, Wharton, and William Franklin sought to finance a newspaper to disseminate their political beliefs to a mass audience. They were disgusted by Hall's efforts to maintain some semblance of journalistic impartiality, and regarded him as an enemy. With Galloway and Wharton as silent partners, Goddard's *Pennsylvania Chronicle* became the standard-bearer of the anti-proprietarians. Galloway and Wharton needed "a Press henceforth as open and safe to them, as Hall's and Bradford's are to the other Party," William Franklin informed his father, and a printer to conduct it.[62] Galloway and Wharton promised to put up half the capital in exchange for half the profits. Galloway, using his position as speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly, assured Goddard the legislative printing contract. A provision in the agreement required Goddard to consult with his partners "in every material step, or transaction, relating to said business."[63] In this manner, Galloway and Wharton planned to exercise editorial control of the newspaper. They also planned to make Franklin

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59. Thomas Greenleaf to the New York State Legislature, 10 December 1788, Book Trades Collection, American Antiquarian Society.

60. William Franklin to Benjamin Franklin, 13 November 1766, *PBF*, vol. 13, 498-502. On Goddard's role in the *Constitutional Courant*, see Ralph Frasca, " 'At the Sign of the Bribe Refused': The *Constitutional Courant* and the Stamp Act, 1765," *New Jersey History* 107 (1989): 21-39.

61. William Goddard, *The Partnership: or the History of the Rise and Progress of the Pennsylvania Chronicle* (Philadelphia: William Goddard, 1770), 1-5; Ward L. Miner, *William Goddard, Newspaperman* (Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 1962), 52-110. For details of the proprietorship issue, see Benjamin H. Newcomb, *Franklin and Galloway: A Political Partnership* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 136-60.

62. William Franklin to Benjamin Franklin, 13 November 1766, *PBF*, vol.13, 500-01.

63. *The Partnership, 6-10.*

a partner when he returned from England. Word that Franklin provided financial support to Goddard's print shop reached Hall, who objected to his erstwhile partner aiding a competitor. Franklin denied financial support of the *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, although he did allow Goddard to rent an office he owned and to use a printing press which Franklin had previously leased to Benjamin Mecom and James Parker.[64]

The partnership began calmly, with Goddard publishing many of Galloway's pro-Crown essays and rehabilitating Franklin's reputation, bruised because of accusations he supported the Stamp Act. He also declined to print an anti-Galloway article because it was unnecessary to print "all the Trash which every rancorous, illiberal, anonymous Scribbler" submitted.[65] Later he also refused space to an essay which criticized his own editorial conduct. Proprietarians subsequently accused Goddard of being a Galloway puppet. Stung by the accusations, but beginning to see some truth in them, Goddard asserted his press freedom following passage of the Townshend Acts, a thinly-disguised successor to the Stamp Act. Goddard was the first American to publish proprietarian John Dickinson's "Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania," which proposed limiting Parliament's power. These essays "deserved the serious attention of all North-America," Goddard wrote.[66] This view was diametrically opposed to the sentiments of his Loyalist partners. The enraged Galloway "ridiculed my notions about liberty and the rights of mankind," Goddard later recalled.[67] Goddard also used his newspaper to attack Franklin, whom he closely identified with the now-despised Galloway. Goddard reprinted portions of an earlier Dickinson pamphlet which accused Franklin and others of using the Stamp Act to place the "fatal fetters" of slavery on the colonies and secure "part of the horrid plunder in oppressive offices for THEMSELVES and THEIR CREATURES."[68] As a further snub, Goddard refused to print a Franklin essay on smuggling, after promising that he would.[69]

Zealously embracing press freedom, Goddard severed the partnership with Galloway and Wharton in May 1769, and commenced a fierce campaign to discredit Galloway in his 1770 bid for re-election to the Assembly. He published a pamphlet exposing Wharton and Galloway's manipulation of the newspaper, calling them "enemies to their country."[70] Galloway narrowly retained his seat. Goddard later blasted the two Loyalists repeatedly in the *Pennsylvania Chronicle.*[71] From London, Franklin congratulated Galloway on his victory and consoled him on the defamations. "We must not in the Course

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64. David Hall to Franklin, 27 January 1767, *PBF*, vol. 14, 16-18; Franklin to Hall, 14 April 1767, *PBF,* vol.14, 126-28.
65. *Pennsylvania Chronicle,* 16 March 1767.
66. Ibid., 6 April, 1767.
67. *The Partnership,* 5-19.
68. *Pennsylvania Chronicle,* 4 July 1768.
69. William Franklin to Benjamin Franklin, 10 May 1768, *PBF*, vol. 15, 121.
70. *The Partnership*, 5-16, 22-63.
71. See, e.g., *Pennsylvania Chronicle,* 23 September 1771, 24 February, 27 April, 11 and 25 May, 13 July, 1772.

of Publick Life expect immediate Approbation, and immediate grateful Acknowledgement of our Services," Franklin wrote. "But let us persevere, thro' Abuse and even Injury. The internal Satisfaction of a good Conscience is always present, and Time will do us Justice in the Minds of the People, even of those at present the most prejudic'd against us."[72] Although Galloway won the battle by retaining his place in the Assembly, he and his faction lost the war. Other important anti-proprietarians lost their Assembly seats in 1770 and 1772, and Galloway never regained his former popularity, especially among merchants and mechanics, who were influenced by Goddard's diatribes. By 1772, Galloway's party was virtually extinct.[73]

Although Goddard upheld the right to criticize public officials, a right inherent in a free press, his pamphlet, "The Partnership," earned Franklin's disdain. Goddard had not merely rebelled against the conventions of the Franklin network, as Holt and others had done; he had gone further. By attacking Galloway, Franklin's closest political ally in Pennsylvania, and by playing an integral role in decimating Franklin's political party, Goddard had invited the wrath of one of the most powerful, wealthy and influential men in the American colonies. Upon receiving a copy of "A True and Faithful NARRATIVE" ..., Goddard's 1771 sequel to "The Partnership," which continued the attack on Galloway, Franklin responded, "I cast my eye over Goddard's Piece against our Friend Mr. Galloway and then lit my Fire with it. I think such feeble malicious attacks cannot hurt him."[74] However, they did, and Franklin knew it.

The cessation of his partnership with Galloway and Wharton proved too great a financial hardship on Goddard. He left town in 1773 to commence the first newspaper in Maryland, the *Maryland Journal,* leaving his sister, Mary Katherine Goddard, to superintend the *Pennsylvania Chronicle.*[75] Postal problems with both newspapers made Goddard increasingly concerned. Newspaper publishers were particularly sensitive to flaws in the British postal system, because they relied on it to deliver mail for newsgathering purposes and to carry their newspapers to other towns. Goddard suspected Franklin, in his capacity as deputy postmaster general, was deliberately impeding mail service for Goddard's newspapers. Announcing he was forced to pay for a private postal rider, Goddard informed Pennsylvania readers that their newspaper "will, by the Establishment of a new Northern Post, be able to visit its old Friends in this Province, from whom it hath, for some Time, been cut off by ... one of the D. Postmasters General." The reference to Franklin was clear.[76]

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72. Benjamin Franklin to Joseph Galloway, 2 December 1772, *PBF*, vol. 19, 419.
73. Newcomb, *Franklin and Galloway*, 217-25.
74. Benjamin Franklin to William Franklin, 30 January 1772, *PBF*, vol. 19, 51. William had written this to his father, "Enclosed is a Piece just published (and said to be written) by Goddard, with a View of prejudicing Mr. Galloway at the next Election." William Franklin to Benjamin Franklin, 3 August 1771, *PBF*, vol. 18, 196.
75. Miner, *William Goddard, Newspaperman*, 109-12.
76. *Pennsylvania Chronicle,* 27 November 1773; Miner, *William Goddard, Newspaperman,* 137-40.

Goddard was determined to remedy the postal system's flaws and circumvent Franklin's power to exact revenge for the harsh editorial treatment of Galloway and Wharton. In February 1774 Goddard closed his Philadelphia newspaper, sent for his sister to succeed him at the helm of the *Maryland Journal,* and traveled throughout the colonies establishing a voluntary network of local offices paid for by subscribers.[77] These would be supervised by a postmaster general in New York who would be elected by provincial postal committees and operate the entire system at cost. After securing the support of Committees of Correspondence throughout the colonies, Goddard's spectacular "Constitutional Post" was implemented. It was immediately successful, and drove the British post out of business in 1775, ending Royal control of colonial correspondence.[78]

Goddard's cause was aided by Whig editors throughout the colonies. Isaiah Thomas, printer of the *Massachusetts Spy,* praised the plan and Goddard, who "has long been noted as the Proprietor and Employer of a very FREE PRESS."[79] Thomas underscored the importance of Goddard's mission by informing readers that the British Post was "obstructing intelligence from colony to colony, by subjecting the news-papers to an ENORMOUS POSTAGE," which "nothing can prevent but establishing posts of our own."[80]

Goddard presented his "Constitutional Post" to the Second Continental Congress during the summer of 1775. This system, which became the model for the U.S. Postal Service, was readily accepted by the Congress, which was pleased to take over a system already in operation and extending from Maine to Virginia. When Franklin returned from London, he immediately became a candidate for postmaster general by virtue of his earlier experience as head of the British post. The Congress unanimously chose the personable Franklin, sweeping aside the embattled Goddard. Goddard then sought the second-ranking position of comptroller, for which he, as founder of the system, would have been a logical choice.[81] However, Franklin — motivated by revenge and nepotism — selected son-in-law Richard Bache for the job, despite having told Bache the

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77. *Maryland Journal,* 2 February 1774.

78. Miner, *William Goddard, Newspaperman,* 112-36; Wallace B. Eberhard, "Press and Post Office in Eighteenth-Century America: Origins of a Public Policy," in Donovan H. Bond and W. Reynolds McLeod, eds., *Newsletters to Newspapers: Eighteenth-Century Journalism* (Morgantown: School of Journalism, West Virginia University, 1977), 148-149.

79. *Massachusetts Spy,* 17 March 1774.

80. Ibid, 24 March 1774.

81. William Goddard to Isaiah Thomas, 15 April 1811, Isaiah Thomas Papers, American Antiquarian Society; Miner, *William Goddard, Newspaperman,* 131-35, 147-48; Wesley Ed. Rich,*The History of the U.S. Post Office to the Year 1829* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924), 48-49; Lawrence C. Wroth, *The History of Printing in Colonial Maryland, 1686-1776* (Baltimore: Typothetai, 1922), 119-46. Goddard was apprenticed to James Parker and assisted him with postal duties when Parker served as comptroller of the British post under Franklin. See Miner, *William Goddard, Newspaperman,* 113.

previous year that he had no power to secure a postal position. Goddard was offered the modest job of surveying postal roads.[82]

Goddard felt he had been cheated by politicians who had too-quickly forgotten his contribution to the postal system. Seeking salve for his wounded pride, he applied to the Congress for a political appointment as a lieutenant colonel in George Washington's Continental Army during the summer of 1776.[83] Washington disapproved the petition, claiming that Goddard's appointment would cause jealousy among the ranks and "would be attended with endless confusion."[84] Goddard was further confounded when Franklin left for France on a diplomatic mission, appointing Richard Bache as the new postmaster general on 7 November 1776. However, Goddard was not promoted to comptroller. By this time Goddard was sure of a Franklin vendetta, so he resigned as surveyor in January 1777.[85]

Bitter at what he believed to be ingratitude and confident Franklin was responsible for his misfortune, Goddard returned to Baltimore and joined his sister in publishing the *Maryland Journal.* However, he remained angry, writing to his old friend Holt in 1778 for advice on the advisability of attacking Franklin in print. This would have been a rare occurrence for the times, because Franklin was already regarded as a vital founder of the infant nation. Holt responded that such an attack would be justified because of Franklin's suspected complicity in the Stamp Act and the fact that he arranged for many of his friends to be named stamp masters. Holt claimed that Franklin was motivated chiefly by gain for himself and his family. Assailing Franklin's character, Holt called him "a dangerous person, primarily attentive to his own Interest, and always acting in Subserviency to it upon all Occasions, even when it clashed with that of the Publick."[86]

There is no evidence Goddard launched this proposed attack. However, still bitter after thirty-three years, Goddard flagellated Franklin's reputation in a letter to Isaiah Thomas, who was collecting reminiscences about early-American journalism for a revised edition of his book on the history of printing. Goddard alleged that Franklin had entered into a "conspiracy" with Galloway and Wharton to overthrow Pennsylvania's proprietary government so that the three could have "Wealth & Power for themselves & Connexions." When this plan failed, "from

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82. Benjamin Franklin to Richard Bache, 17 February 1774, *PBF,* vol. 21, 101; Franklin to Silas Deane, 27 August 1775, *PBF*, vol. 22, 183-84; Bache to Franklin, 5 February 1777, *PBF*, vol. 23, 279-80.

83. Edmund C. Burnett, ed., *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress* (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1921), vol. 4, 494-95.

84. John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1932), vol. 5, 350.

85. William Goddard to Isaiah Thomas, 15 April 1811, Isaiah Thomas Papers, American Antiquarian Society; Miner, *William Goddard, Newspaperman,* 149; Rich, *History of the U.S. Post Office,* 49.

86. John Holt to William Goddard, 26 February 1778, Book Trades Collection, American Antiquarian Society.

a Royalist he insidiously turned into a dark Republican," Goddard wrote.[87] When Franklin returned to America in 1775,

> he was considered a suspicious doubtful character — and Mr. S. Adams, & other Patriots, asked me my opinion of him, at Philadelphia being very suspicious of him. I told them if they could convince him that it would redound to his INTEREST to support the American Cause, he would soon declare himself in its Favour, and not otherwise. This they did, & Franklin became, as they advised me, an unsuspected confidential PATRIOT."[88]

Goddard had good reason to be angry with Franklin, or at least jealous of him. Franklin's name will endure as a hallmark of freedom, patriotism, and ingenuity, while Goddard has since plunged into the depths of obscurity. It is Franklin, not Goddard, who is commonly credited with establishing the postal system. In his book on printing history, Thomas wrote of Goddard, "When the loaves and fishes were to be divided, aspiring, interested, nominal patriots crowded him into the background, and his services were in a great measure forgotten."[89]

Conclusion

At the beginning of the Revolutionary Era, Franklin expressed unshakable faith in the virtue of King George III and the future felicity of colonial relations with Great Britain. He predicted:

> I am of Opinion, that his Virtue, and the Consciousness of his sincere Intentions to make his People happy, will give him Firmness and Steadiness and when that Firmness is fully perceiv'd, Faction will dissolve and be dissipated like a Morning Fog before the rising Sun, leaving the rest of the Day clear, with a Sky serene and cloudless. Such, after a few of the first Years, will be the future Course of his Majesty's Reign, which I predict will be happy and truly glorious.[90]

However, the course of events from the Stamp Act to the first military engagements, plus the pressure of public opinion, compelled Franklin to slowly alter his views. By the eve of the Revolutionary War, he observed to Galloway that Englishmen's virtue had rotted, while Americans could be justly proud of "the glorious publick Virtue so predominant in our rising Country."[91]

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87. William Goddard to Isaiah Thomas, 15 April 1811, Isaiah Thomas Papers, American Antiquarian Society.
88. Ibid.
89. Thomas, *The History of Printing in America*, 322.
90. Benjamin Franklin to William Strahan, 19 December 1763, *PBF*, vol. 10, 407.
91. Franklin to Joseph Galloway, 25 February 1775, *PBF*, vol. 21, 509.

Newspapers were an integral catalyst of this augmented public virtue and freedom, and Franklin's printing associates were eager to draw attention to their own importance in early-American society. "Papers are like watchtowers in the mountains of Switzerland, suddenly capturing the attention of a whole nation like wildfire, to warn them of danger, to admonish them to be on guard, to be united and firm to destroy the cunning of the enemy and reaffirm freedom," Franklin's German-language printing partner Henry Miller professed. At the same time, newspapers "serve us as a good educator or extend our connection to other people."[92]

As printers assumed the responsibilities of sentinels and educators during the Revolutionary Era, they more closely aligned their presses with the public interest. Compelled by economic self-preservation to unite in denunciation of the Stamp Act, printers discovered a wellspring of support for legal and economic press freedom among the people. The short-lived effort to generate revenue through taxation had presented colonial printers with a novel challenge. It represented a grave financial burden for their craft, yet it induced them to publicize their resentment and create public opposition by equating the tax with subjugation. The press played an integral role in creating opposition to the tax and focusing public resentment by overtly directing popular opinion. By balking at burdensome taxes upon the press, printers linked their economic interests with those of colonists. To simplify complex economic and political disputes during the Revolutionary era, and thereby generate public support, printers and their correspondents portrayed the series of conflicts with England as a matter of freedom versus slavery. Once in possession of this power, the proprietors of American journalism continued to remonstrate against British efforts to curb the recalcitrance of the colonies, until military war was the result.

Printer-turned-statesman Benjamin Franklin was a late and somewhat reluctant supporter of the American Revolution. He preferred to wait for passions to cool and then strengthen colonial ties with Great Britain, but the rising tide of American opposition to Great Britain's taxes prompted him to be less conciliatory. Franklin realized his public commitment to the Patriot cause was essential if he was to retain the position of moral teacher he had carefully cultivated since his days as "The Busy-Body" a half-century earlier.[93] Franklin revealed his sentiment about the widening breach between Americans and British in a pamphlet published in 1768 republished in 1774. He was apologetic for "the wild ravings of the at present half distracted Americans," which resulted in mob actions and property damage, and stated, "I do not pretend to support or justify them." But he added his desire "that these people had never been thus needlessly driven out of their senses" by British obstinacy. Foreshadowing American independence, Franklin observed that "this unhappy system of politics

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92. Henry Miller, "On the General Usefulness of Newspapers," *Wochentliche Pennsylvanische Staatsbote*, 31 May 1774 (translation by Marita Spooner).

93. In the first installment of his "The Busy-Body" essays, Franklin decided to "erect my Self into a Kind of *Censor Morum*" whose job it was to publicly commend virtue and censure vice. "The Busy-Body" in *American Weekly Mercury*, 4 February 1729.

tends to dissolve those bands of union, and to sever us for ever."[94] The Declaration of Independence completed the dissolution, and shattered a piece of what Franklin called "that fine and noble China Vase," the British Empire.[95]

The American Revolution also shattered the coherence of Franklin's printing network. In the rebellion's early years, most network members followed Franklin's direction and pursued moderation and impartiality. However, ideological passions and public pressure soon compelled them to take more partisan stances. With Franklin in England on diplomatic service, his loosely-structured but powerful and influential web of printers began to twist and tear. By the end of the war, it had come apart entirely.

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94. Benjamin Franklin, "Causes of the American Discontents," 5-7 January 1768, *PBF*, vol. 15, 13. For Franklin's opinion that riots in American "give great Advantage against us to our Enemies," see Franklin to Thomas Cushing, 6 October 1774, *PBF*, vol. 21, 327.

95. Benjamin Franklin to Lord Howe, 20 July 1776, *PBF*, vol. 22, 520.

Madison Misinterpreted: Historical Presentism Skews Scholarship

By Paul H. Gates Jr. and Bill F. Chamberlin

During the past two centuries, Madison's famous quote supporting public education has been frequently taken out of the context of its original use. The most common misinterpretation is by journalists and journalism scholars who have fallen prey to historical fallacies and use it in support of freedom of information arguments.

"A popular Government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy; or, perhaps both."
— James Madison[1]

Madison's familiar quotation is most often seen today in the writing of both journalism scholars and practitioners in support of a right of access to government documents and other collections of data. While Madison may have agreed with such a goal as a general principle,[2] he almost certainly did not have it in mind on 4 August 1822 when he wrote the sentence above as part of a letter to the Lieutenant Governor of Kentucky.

When Madison wrote to W.T. Barry that summer day, he was writing in support of education, the common nineteenth century understanding of the

1. Madison to William T. Barry, 4 August 1822, *Writings of James Madison,* ed. Gaillard Hunt, vol. 9 (New York: George Putnam's, 1910), 103.
2. For a review of the attitudes of political leaders toward public availability of government information during the first decade of the nation's existence, see Daniel N. Hoffman, *Governmental Secrecy and the Founding Fathers: A Study in Constitutional Controls* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1981).

term information. Over the last forty years or so, however, Madison's words have appeared to twentieth century eyes to have a very different meaning.

Since at least the early 1950s, information has been taken by many writers to mean a specific body of knowledge or collection of facts, often in written form. Giving one of those definitions to the word thus allows Madison's sentence to be lifted from its original context and used to support a different idea than the one he was writing about. Researchers and other writers have misused the Madison quote so often that a modern myth has been built around its true meaning.

Part I of this article will show that, in its original context, Madison's sentence was arguing not for access to government information, but for widespread public education. Part II will examine the history of the meaning of the quote's keystone — the word "information" — in its eighteenth and early nineteenth century context. Part III will give examples of the quote's use by education historians, journalists, and media access advocates. Part IV will review two common traps in historical research which may have contributed to the misuse of the Madison quote.

Part I: Madison's Letter to W. T. Barry

Madison's quotation comes from a letter he wrote to Lieutenant Governor Barry about five weeks after Barry wrote to the former President. Barry had written to Madison in late June asking for advice and suggestions on the state's plan to institute free public education. Madison, who had left office five years earlier, was well known as a supporter of public education. Four years after writing to Barry, Madison was appointed a trustee of the University of Virginia.

After the usual acknowledgement of receipt of Barry's letter in the first paragraph, Madison plainly sets out the gist of his reply in the first sentence of the next paragraph: "The liberal appropriations made by the Legislature of Kentucky for a general system of Education cannot be too much applauded."[3] Madison's emphatic endorsement of the educational plan comes next: "A popular Government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy; or, perhaps both." As often as not, late twentieth century users of that sentence also quote the next, and last, sentence of the paragraph: "Knowledge will forever govern ignorance: And a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives."[4]

Madison then goes on to recount his support for statehood for Kentucky, where early settlers included Virginia friends who had moved west. He applauds the "enlightened patriotism which is now providing for the State a Plan of Education embracing every class of Citizens. . . ."[5] and warns that "No

3. Madison to Barry, *Writings,* vol. 9, 103.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., 104.

error is more certain than the one proceeding from a hasty & superficial view . . . that the people at large have no interest in the establishment of Academies, Colleges, and Universities. . . ."[6]

A large portion of the middle section of the letter begins with a paean to education as a guardian of liberty before moving on to discuss a scheme for its funding. Madison wrote: "Learned Institutions ought to be favorite objects with every free people. They throw that light over the public mind which is the best security against crafty & dangerous encroachments on the public liberty."[7] Madison closes that section of the letter with a rhetorical flourish: "What spectacle can be more edifying or more seasonable, than that of Liberty & Learning, each leaning on the other for their mutual & surest support?"[8]

The middle section of the letter also briefly outlines Madison's plan for the support of public schools through a general property tax. He envisioned this tax funding as an account that would provide scholarships for the needy but talented, not only in Kentucky but throughout the Union. During this discussion, he gave another hint as to his understanding of the meaning and usage of the word information. In support of the property tax scheme, he pointed out that without public education, education in private institutions, especially abroad, remains a benefit only the rich can provide for their sons. The result, he writes, is that "influence is monopolized which superior information every where possesses."[9]

The concluding paragraphs of the letter respond directly to Kentucky's public school plans, which Barry had outlined in his letter in his capacity as chairman of the state committee charged with implementing them. Madison supported Kentucky's plan to model a school system after some in the "Eastern States . . . where there has been the longest experience in plans of popular education."[10] He also approved of the committee's plan for a core curriculum of "Reading, Writing, & Arithmetic," but suggested the addition of geography.[11]

Part II: The Meaning of Information: 1778-1835

Many words in common use today appear similar to those found in written works as old as the Middle English poetry of Chaucer. We often think we know what they mean because they look like a contemporary English word. Much like the "faux ami" (false friend) of the novice French student, however, they are a trap for the unwary, carrying a meaning which is no longer current. "A word," as Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes has noted, "is not a crystal, transparent and unchanged, it is the skin of a living thought and may vary

6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.

greatly in color and content according to the circumstances and the time in which it is used."[12]

Today, of course, the popular usage of the word information carries the meaning of a fact or piece of intelligence, or even a chunk of electronic data; however, the meaning of information in English from the late eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century, which encompassed the lives of the Founders, carried a substantially different denotation.

Around the beginning of that seventy-five-year span, between about 1775 and the middle of the next century, information was used to describe the molding of the mind or character by training, instruction, or teaching. Beginning in the American revolutionary period, writers in both the colonies and England dealt frequently with the need for education in a number of contexts and liberally used information to express that need. In the 1778 classic, *The History of England*, Catherine Sawbridge Macaulay used the word to argue that an education was vital so that British subjects would know of the obligations they were under to the government.

> Ignorance of laws, if not willful, is a just excuse for their transgression, and if the care of the government does not extend to the proper education of the subject and to their proper information on the nature of moral turpitude and legal crimes and to the encouragement of virtue, with what face of justice can they punish delinquency?[13]

Several years later, as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, Major William Pierce, who represented Georgia, sketched brief descriptive impressions of his fellow delegates during idle moments. Writing about John Dickinson, a signer from Pennsylvania, Pierce said, "Mr. Dickinson has been famed through all America, for his Farmers Letters; he is a Scholar, and said to be a Man of very extensive information."[14]

One of the most authoritative arbiters of English meaning in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, American lexicographer Noah Webster, also used information to mean education in a 1790 essay. Webster wrote, while decrying the attention given to foreign languages in American schools at the expense of English:

> But the high estimation in which the learned languages have been held, has discouraged a due attention to our own. . . . This opinion has produced various and arbitrary practices, in

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12. *Towne v. Eisner,* 245 U.S. 418, 425 (1918).
13. Catherine Sawbridge Macaulay, *The History of England, From the Revolution to the Present Time, In a Series of Letters to the Reverent Doctor Wilson* (Bath, England: R. Crutwell, 1778), 369-70.
14. Saul K. Padover, ed., *The Living U.S. Constitution,* 2d rev. ed., ed. Jacob W. Landynski (New York; New American Library, 1983), 35.

> the use of the language, even among men of the most information and accuracy. . . .[15]

Shifting to a commentary on the need for an educated electorate to perform civic duties, Webster continued:

> Of such consequence is it to society, that the people who make laws, should be well informed that I conceive no Legislature can be justified in neglecting proper establishments for this purpose . . . Every small district should be furnished with a school, at least four months in a year; when boys are not otherwise employed. This school should be kept by the most reputable and well informed man in the district.[16]

A New England Unitarian minister, Simeon Doggett, dedicated a Rhode Island school in 1796 with a speech that was widely reprinted. Doggett told his audience that education would be citizens' best bulwark against tyranny:

> Let general information, and a just knowledge of the rights of man be diffused through the great bulk of the people in any nation, and it will not be in the power of all the combined despots on earth to enslave them . . . Convinced of the vast consequence of literature our pious ancestors gave the earliest attention to the education of their youth. By this means, information was generally diffused through the Colonies, and many of our citizens were profound in science, the rights of man, the histories of nations, and political wisdom.[17]

Thomas Jefferson's main occupation in retirement became nearly constant lobbying through letter writing on behalf of education generally and particularly for his beloved university. In his "Report of the Commissioners for the University of Virginia," Jefferson set down the objectives of an education. Heading the long list were the goals of giving "to every citizen the information he needs for the transaction of his own business; To enable him to calculate for himself, and to express and preserve his ideas, his contracts and accounts, in writing; . . ."[18]

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15. Noah Webster, "On the Education of Youth in America," in *A Collection of Essays and Fugitive Writings, On Moral, Historical, Political and Literary Subjects,* American Antiquarian Society microprint, no. 23053 (Boston: Isaiah Thomas and E.T. Andrews, 1790), 6.
16. Ibid., 25-26. See also *Oxford English Dictionary,* 2d ed., s.v. "information."
17. Simeon Doggett, *A Discourse on Education, Delivered at the Dedication and Opening of Bristol Academy, the 18th Day of July, A.D. 1976,* American Antiquarian Society microprint, no. 32062 (New Bedford, Mass.: J. Spooner, 1797), 16.
18. Merrill D. Peterson, ed., *Thomas Jefferson: Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1984), 459.

Part III: Journalism and Education Historians' Interpretation of Madison's Quotation

Historians of both journalism and education have often used the quotation from Madison's letter to Barry, but to make vastly different points.

Education historians appear to have adopted the quotation much earlier than journalism scholars, dating back at least as far as the era of World War I. Ellwood P. Cubberley, an education historian at Stanford, was among the first to use the Madison quote in his 1919 history of public education from its introduction to the United States in the seventeenth century.[19] The quote appeared near the beginning of his chapter on the spread of public education in the post-Revolutionary War period. That chapter featured a number of references to the ideas and contributions of both Madison and Jefferson to the promotion of the importance of education. Cubberley's contemporary, Ross L. Finney, also used Madison's encouragement to Barry to illustrate the Founders' commitment to free public school education.[20] Two later historians, George R. Cressman and Harold W. Benda, placed Madison's quote prominently near the beginning of their undergraduate text.[21] There, they used the quote to justify the taxation necessary to fund public schools.

Journalists, journalism historians, journalism educators, and media lawyers have all invoked Madison as well, but they use the quote to support a right of access to information held by government. Many of those giving a contemporary definition to information and using the quotation out of context are among the most prominent in the field.

One of the first experts to use Madison's quotation in journalism-related writing was Columbia University lecturer and *New York Herald Tribune* attorney Harold L. Cross. [22] Cross included Madison's comment as an example of "[p]olitical justification for a fundamental right of freedom of information by means of access to official information . . ." Cross also reversed the positions of the sentences in the quote, putting the sentence beginning "Knowledge will forever govern ignorance" in front of the one beginning, "A popular Government . . ."

The quotation is also commonly found in journalism textbooks, including the prominent *Mass Communication Law* by Donald M. Gillmor, Jerome A. Barron, Todd F. Simon, and Herbert A. Terry. The four authors quote Madison without discussion in the introductory section, "The Right to

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19. Ellwood P. Cubberley, *Public Education in the United States: A Study and Interpretation of American Educational History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1919), 57-58.

20. Ross L. Finney, *The American Public School: A Genetic Study of Principles, Practices, and Present Problems* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1921), 38.

21. George R. Cressman and Harold W. Brenda, *Public Education in America,* 3d ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1966), 6.

22. Harold L. Cross, *The People's Right to Know: Legal Access to Public Records and Proceedings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), 129.

Gather News," of the chapter on "Access to Executive and Legislative Information."[23]

Historian Margaret A. Blanchard uses two sentences from the Madison letter in a scholarly article supporting access.[24] In a section on government manipulation of public opinion, she quotes Madison in arguing the need for truthful news from the executive branch in times of crisis in order for the public to make wise decisions.

Misuses of Madison's quote are by no means limited to academics. U.S. Supreme Court justices have also used the quote in their pro-access opinions. For example, Justice John Paul Stevens used the quote erroneously in a concurrence in a 1984 case. In his opinion, Stevens quoted Madison to approve of the Court's holding that the press has a right to attend the pretrial voir dire examination of potential jurors.[25]

Many other examples are found in other judicial opinions, law reviews, and journalism trade publications.[26] The quote is used in articles on topics as

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23. Donald M. Gillmor, Jerome A. Barron, Todd F. Simon, and Herbert E. Terry, *Mass Communication Law: Cases and Comment,* 5th ed. (St. Paul, Minn.: West Publishing Co., 1990), 456.

24. Margaret A. Blanchard, "Free Expression and Wartime: Lessons from the Past, Hopes for the Future," *Journalism Quarterly* 69 (1992): 9.

25. *Press-Enterprise Co. v. Superior Court of California, Riverside County,* 464 U.S. 510, 518 (1984).

26. Among textbooks, see also, e.g., Thomas L. Tedford, *Freedom of Speech in the United States,* 2d ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993), 250, and Harold L. Nelson, Dwight L. Teeter, Jr., and Don R. LeDuc, *Law of Mass Communications: Freedom and Control of Print and Broadcast Media,* 6th ed. (Westbury, N.Y.: Foundation Press, 1989), 432. Among histories, see also, e.g., Margaret A. Blanchard, *Revolutionary Sparks: Freedom of Expression in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), x, and Anthony Lewis, "Introduction," in Norman Dorsen and Stephen Gillers, eds., *None of your Business: Government Secrecy in America* (New York: Penguin Books, 1975), 3. Among other scholarly books, see Franklyn S. Haiman, "Government Secrecy," ch. 16, in Haiman, *Speech and Law in a Free Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 368. Among court opinions, see also, dissents by Justices William O. Douglas and Potter Stewart in *Branzburg v. Hayes,* 408 U.S. 665, 723, 728 (1972); opinion by Judge David Bazelon in *United States v. Mitchell,* 551 F. 2d 1252, 1258 (1976); also see a plurality opinion by Justice William J Brennan Jr. in *Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District v. Pico,* 457 U.S. 853,857 (1982). Among specialized reporters, see, e.g., "The Freedom of Information Act: a 25th Anniversary Retrospective, *Access Reports,* (Lynchburg, Va.: 1991); Leslie Harris and Morton H. Halperin, "Classification System under Fire as Cold War Ends," in *First Principles: National Security and Civil Liberties* (Center for National Security Studies, Washington, D.C., 1992), 1; Jacqueline E. Sharkey, *Under Fire: U.S. Military Restrictions on the Media from Grenada to the Persian Gulf* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Public Integrity, 1991), iii. Among publications for journalists, see, e.g., George P. Kennedy, "Information Could Be Demarcation of Future for 'Haves,' 'Have-nots,' " *presstime,* January 1981, 22; "National FOI Day, March 16, Is James Madison's Birthday," *Iowa Freedom of Information Council Update,* 24 February 1992, 2. Among law reviews, see, e.g., Eric M. Freedman, "Freedom of Information and the First Amendment in a Bureaucratic Age," *Brooklyn*

diverse as criminal investigatory records and National Freedom of Information Day, which is observed on 16 March, Madison's birthday. A scholar who has reviewed the legislative history leading up to the 1966 passage of the Freedom of Information Act[27] reported that the Madison quote was used seventeen times in the House and Senate debates and reports.[28]

Part IV: Historical Fallacies

There is no evidence which suggests that the common misapplication of Madison's quote represents any deliberate effort to mislead. The quote is simply a forceful statement which seems to contemporary writers to mean what it says. It appears so clear, in fact, that writers probably are tempted to use it without checking for context and precision of meaning.

Those caught in the quagmire of Madison misinterpretation may have simply fallen prey to one or more historical fallacies. Historian David Hackett Fischer has identified several which may apply here, but two seem most appropriate.

Fischer would describe the use of Madison's quotation to support a particular position as an "appeal to authority,"[29] which can be the use of the reputation of someone held in respect. As a Founder and the principal architect of the First Amendment, Madison is certainly among the most respected thinkers on human rights and liberties. Because of this stature, Madison's support of access to government information by journalists could be an important weapon in the justification of the principle to legislators and courts.

Perhaps the most insidious of fallacies at work here, however, is the fallacy of presentism. Sometimes called the fallacy of *nunc pro tunc* (then for

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Law Review 49 (1983): 835; Douglas L. Colber, "The Motion in Limine in Politically Sensitive Cases: Silencing the Defendant at Trial, *Stanford Law Review* 39 (1987): 1327; R. James Assaf, "Mr. Smith Comes Home: The Constitutional Presumption of Openness in Local Legislative Meetings," *Case Western Reserve Law Review* 40 (1989-1990): 252; Lee C. Bollinger, "Free Speech and intellectual Values," *Yale Law Journal* 92 (1983): 455, n.50; Roshon L. Magnus "Judicial Erosion of the Standard of Public Disclosure of Investigatory Records under the FOIA after *FBI v. Abrahamson," Howard Law Journal* 26 (1983): 1637; Paul G. Cassell, "Restrictions on Press Coverage of Military Operations: The Right of Access, Grenada, and 'Off-The-Record Wars,'" Georgetown *Law Journal* 73 (1985): 952; Patricia M. Wald, "The Freedom of information Act: A Short Case Study in Perils and Paybacks of Legislating Democratic Values," *Emory Law Journal* (1984): 653; David F. Freedman, "Press Passes and Trespasses: Newsgathering on Private Property," *Columbia Law Review* 84 (1984); 1319; and Charles D. Ferris and James A. Kirkland, "Fairness — The Broadcaster's Hippocratic Oath," *Catholic University Law Review* 34 (1985): 619, n. 86.

27. 5 U.S.C. 552 (1988).

28. Thomas M. Susman, "Introduction to the Issues, Problems, and Relevant Law, " in "Your Business, Your Trade Secrets, and Your Government," *Administrative Law Review* 34 (1982): 117.

29. David Hackett Fisher, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 283-84.

now), it maintains that social conditions and language are static and enjoy a rigidity over time. Fischer describes presentism as "the mistaken idea that the proper way to do history is to prune away the dead branches of the past, and to preserve the green buds and twigs which have grown into the dark forest of our contemporary world."[30] Fischer sees presentism as leading writers to eliminate sufficient context of the time in which an event occurred to allow its placement in a plausible modern setting. There, stripped of its original surroundings, it is made to fit in with current sensibilities and understandings.

Conclusion

Madison, when he wrote to William Barry in 1822, obviously believed that the new republic depended on informed voters. But Madison used the word information to discuss the importance of public education in preparing the electorate.

Many twentieth century writers rely on the Madison quote to justify the importance of an informed electorate, a goal consistent with Madison's intent. However, the modern writers quote Madison to promote the importance of informing voters by adopting laws that give them access to information held by the government. This is a meaning that, the evidence shows, Madison did not have in mind.

The use of the word "information" has changed in the last two centuries, even if the uses are not entirely unrelated. While it is beyond the scope of this article to trace the precise etymology of the word, it is obvious that communications scholars have ignored the context and the original meaning of the Madison quote to give it a meaning he had not intended. The new role of the quote results from a human tendency to recast the past to fulfill a current objective. In this case, writers have, in Mrs. Malaprop's phrase, "anticipated the past," and decided that their "retrospection will be all to the future."[31]

Original meaning, contemporary usage, and the quotation's place in Madison's letter illustrate why historians and other writers must consult not only texts but contexts, and not only linguistic expressions but the issues of the period beyond language, in their always-imperfect attempts to understand and interpret the past for the present.[32]

The history of the misuse of the Madison quote also suggests a responsibility for scholars. Whether media lawyers and judges misquoted Madison before or after historians and legal scholars did is not yet clear. But it is clear that a misuse of history has played some role in the public policy debate about access to government information.

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30. Ibid., 135.

31. Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *The Rivals* (London: Geo. Routledge and Sons, 1887), 122.

32. For an excellent discussion of this point, see William Flesch, "Ancestral Voices: de Man and his Defenders," in *Responses: On Paul de Man's Wartime Journalism,* ed. Werner Hamacher, Neil Herta, and Thomas Keenan (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 173-84.

The authors of this article recognize the contributions to the field of the several excellent scholars and writers who have misused the Madison quote, and do not deny that their own vision of history is shaped by their own biases and practical constraints.

The most important lessons perhaps, of the contemporary use of the Madison quote, are the reminders that what appears to be true is not always so and that the unraveling of history is a never-ending adventure.

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The Editor as Politician: W.R. Ronald and the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933

By Elizabeth Evenson Williams

The independent nature of small-town editors is nowhere better personified than in William Roy Ronald, publisher of the Mitchell, South Dakota, Republican. *During the twenties and thirties he gradually switched party allegiance and became an active participant rather than journalistic observer in a campaign for a radical change in agricultural policy, embodied in critical legislation that became part of President Roosevelt's famous first hundred days.*

For a small-town editor to help promote, write, and enact national legislation is unusual. Rarer still is that the editor would expend his energies when the legislation had become the policy espoused by the presidential candidate of a different political party. Yet this is precisely what William Roy Ronald, editor and publisher of the Mitchell, South Dakota, *Daily Republican*, did in the early 1930s as an exponent of the Agricultural Adjustment Act in the New Deal of Franklin D. Roosevelt. This article will examine Ronald's significant role in developing, promoting, and drafting early New Deal farm legislation.

The political independence demonstrated by Ronald can be regarded as an example of the flinty individualism of a prairie editor. But it can also be viewed in the context of an overall evaluation by editors of the nation of their relationships with political parties. That editorial reform movement began in the East after the Civil War and brought with it the twin concerns of progressive reform and increased impartiality in the reporting of news. This new code of

"independent journalism" was led by cultured, college-trained journalists like Ronald.[1]

Ronald was born in Grandview, Iowa, on 1 June 1879, orphaned at age three by the deaths of both parents, he was reared by an aunt, and attended Monmouth College, in Illinois, from which he was graduated at the young age of 19. His first newspaper experience was as a solicitor in Iowa and Indiana, and then as city editor of the Marion, Indiana, *Chronicle.* In 1900, he began a seven-year stint with the *Sioux City Tribune,* a newspaper noted for independent editorial policy, serving as city editor and then managing editor. In January 1909 he moved ninety miles north to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to become an editorial writer for the *Independent Press*, his last stop before buying the *Republican* of Mitchell, where he spent the rest of his life until his death on 3 April 1951. [2]

By the time he bought his newspaper in November 1909, the thirty-year-old Ronald already had a decade of newspaper experience. Ronald bought his newspaper, then called the *Republican*, in 1909. During the first decade or so of his ownership, its editorial positions reflected that party's philosophy. But Ronald provided a portent of his independent spirit in the first editorial he wrote for the Mitchell paper. He proclaimed that he would remain "free to express his own views and convictions in his own way."[3]

It was more than editorial rhetoric. In heavily Republican South Dakota, Ronald came, increasingly, to move away from the conservative wing of the Republican party, steering instead the course of a Progressive Republican. Ronald came to feel a great affinity for South Dakota's maverick Progressive Republican, Peter Norbeck, first governor and later U.S. senator. This link with Norbeck would be key in the drive to shape farm legislation in the early 1930s. Later, he sometimes followed a Democratic course, most notably when, in 1932 Ronald became a member of a highly influential group that wrote and promoted farm legislation; in that fall's presidential election, for the first time he endorsed a Democrat, Franklin Roosevelt.

Two things happened to make Ronald increasingly independent of formal party ties — the national Republican Party and, eventually, the state Republican Party became too conservative for Ronald, and Ronald's own political thinking changed. In addition, Ronald came to view agriculture and its economic well-being as his foremost editorial concern. His interest in farm matters was no surprise given South Dakota's dependence on agriculture. But Ronald's positions were characterized not by provincial interest but by the depth and clarity of his thinking. He correctly identified the causes and complexities of the farm problem and tried to push unwilling farm groups and politicians into action.

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1. Michael E. McGerr, *The Decline of Popular Politics: The American North, 1865-1928* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 113-121.
2. Doane Robinson, *History of South Dakota,* Vol. 2 (Chicago and New York: American Historical Society Inc., 1930), 493-495; *Daily Republic,* 3 April 1951.
3. *Republican* (Mitchell, S.D.), 1 November 1909.

The situation in rural America began to deteriorate in the 1920s, before the Great Depression hit the rest of the country. The farmer did not share in the postwar prosperity of the 1920s, and such movements as the Nonpartisan League, the 1924 Progressives and the vain attempts by the Congressional farm bloc to enact the McNary-Haugen bill were all manifestations of an farm agrarian unrest that predated the 1929 stock market crash.[4]

As early as the late 1920s, economist John Black, then of the University of Minnesota, later of Harvard, had formulated a governmental approach to agricultural policy that he called "domestic allotment." The basic idea of domestic allotment, which underwent many changes in both name and form, was to pay producers a free-trade price plus the tariff for the part of the crop consumed domestically, and the price minus tariff for the part that was exported, with a system of allotments to individual producers of rights to sell the part of the crop in the domestic market.[5]

Given the agrarian unrest and Ronald's interest in the farm situation, it probably would have been just a matter of time before he expanded his involvement beyond the pages of his own newspaper. In South Dakota, Ronald's fellow editor, Robert Lusk, who published the *Evening Huronite* fifty miles from Mitchell, had advocated the plan editorially in early 1931. As a result, he had been invited to a meeting in Chicago in April of 1932 to promote the domestic allotment concept. Unable to attend, Lusk had told Ronald about the meeting, and as Ronald wrote years later, "I told him I would go if for no other reason than curiosity."[6] There was another connection as well: one of Ronald's editorials had caught the attention of M.L. Wilson of Montana State College, the unofficial chair of the Chicago meeting, and Wilson had Ronald invited.[7]

The unlikely group that met in Chicago on 19 April 1932, included the agricultural economist Wilson; two editors, Ronald and Henry A. Wallace of *Wallaces' Farmer* in Des Moines; and George Peeke, a McNary-Haugen advocate and later first administrator of the Agricultural Adjustment Act. There were also a number of businessmen whose presence would prove crucial both in later political developments and in providing financial support that would keep the work of the domestic allotment group going.[8] The diversity of the group was

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4. Theodore Saloutos and John D. Hicks, *Agricultural Discontent in the Middle West, 1900-1939* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1951), 412.
5. John D. Black, *Agricultural Reform in the United States* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., Inc., 1929), 231.
6. W.R. Ronald, "Caught in the Vortex of the Farm Problem," (draft of article written for "possible sale to a national magazine," ca. 1943 or 1944, courtesy of Mrs. W.R. Ronald), 17. (The original draft is at the Center for Western Studies, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota).
7. Wilson to Ronald, 12 April 1932; Ronald to Wilson, 14 April 1932, M.L. Wilson Papers, Montana State University.
8. Ronald, "In the Vortex," 17; William D. Rowley, *M.L. Wilson and the Campaign for Domestic Allotment* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), 134-135.

central to its ultimate success in effecting farm legislation, because these were men with key connections to power centers in the business and political spheres. And in Ronald they had a skilled publicist who would effectively promote the concept throughout the country — and had the time to do so.[9]

William Roy Ronald

The major outcome of the Chicago meeting was the appointment of a permanent smaller group, called the Voluntary Domestic Allotment Committee, headed by Wilson and including Ronald and Wallace. Immediately after the meeting, Wilson traveled east to make connections in Washington and New York.[10] On his way back to Montana, Wilson stopped in Mitchell, at Ronald's invitation, to address a meeting of bankers, farmers, and businessmen convened by Ronald, a meeting prominently reported by both the Mitchell *Evening Republican* and Lusk's *Evening Huronite*.[11]

During the next several months, which brought several abortive attempts to pass a domestic allotment bill in Congress, both Wilson and Ronald traveled, maintaining contacts with leaders of both Republican and Democratic parties, and with Ronald arranging for coverage with the Associated Press, while on a trip to Washington. Apparently pleased with AP coverage, Ronald later wrote to Mr. Waller of the AP, saying, "Papers throughout the region have used very generally the amount of material you have sent out on this bill."[12]

In June, Ronald wrote then-New York Governor Roosevelt, urging him to back the inclusion of domestic allotment ideas into the Democratic platform. Roosevelt replied with two letters to acknowledge Ronald's views, and he promised to pass them along to those drafting the platform. The correspondence with Roosevelt, Ronald reported to Wilson, was "most significant as to the platform this year, and it certainly establishes a contact which I could follow up on in the event of his election as President. Isn't that a big break?"[13]

Wilson met with Roosevelt in early July, advising him on a suitable location for his major farm policy speech — Topeka, Kansas — and also on his ideas for a farm policy. At virtually the same time Wilson developed contacts

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9. Ronald was free to lend his energies to the demanding campaign because his son Malcolm was by this time actively involved in the day-to-day operations of the Mitchell newspaper.

10. Rowley, 135, 139-140; Ronald to Wilson, 30 April 1932, Wilson Papers.

11. *Republican*, 12 May 1932, and *Evening Huronite*, 12 May 1932.

12. Ronald to Waller, Associated Press, 2 June 1932, Wilson Papers.

13. Ronald to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 13 June 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, President's Personal File, 74; Ronald to Wilson, 23 June 1932, Wilson Papers.

with key Congressional Republicans, including Representative Clifford Hope of Kansas and Senator Peter Norbeck of South Dakota.[14]

During that summer of 1932, during which no domestic allotment bill was passed by Congress, Ronald was on the stump as a speaker in behalf of domestic allotment. For example, his speech to the Rotary Club of Huron, South Dakota, was prominently covered by the *Huronite*. In his editorial praising Ronald's speech, Robert Lusk, in noting Ronald's expenditures of time, effort, and expense for "educational work on behalf of the plan," added that Ronald was making all his trips at his own expense, and that Ronald thought domestic allotment, "the best proposal that has ever been made in behalf of agriculture."[15]

In late August, Ronald went to Chicago to meet with business leaders to promote domestic allotment, at the same time continuing to direct an increasingly expanding publicity campaign. He first used his own newspaper's news and editorial treatments, then filed his pieces through the Associated Press for use by other papers like the *Minneapolis Tribune*.[16]

Ronald also wrote a number of articles for national publications. In his ongoing correspondence with Wilson, Ronald described an article that he and Senator Norbeck were preparing for the *Farm Journal* (it appeared under Norbeck's byline, written by Ronald, in the October 1932 issue), and he mentioned other pieces for the *Nebraska Farmer*, the *Michigan Farmer*, and the *Prairie Farmer*. Ronald explained to Wilson: "Publication of a story on the plan in a few farm papers will automatically gain the interest of others and make more likely their use of similar articles." Ronald also told Wilson that he had printed his own editorials on domestic allotment in a booklet, which was apparently widely requested. The Mitchell editor also got pieces published in both *Capper's Farmer* and the *Dakota Farmer* — all obviously part of his carefully crafted publicity campaign.[17] As the publicity campaign continued, Ronald kept up his feverish pace of letter writing to other players in the domestic allotment effort, including Henry Wallace in Des Moines.

Ronald's efforts did not go unappreciated by Wilson, the head of this unofficial "agricultural brain trust." On 5 September, Wilson wrote to Ronald: "It has really been an inspiration to me to read your letters — I think I would know a Ronald letter if I were to see it in China. They would be characterized by their energy, determination, and clear forceful expression." Wilson added, "I want to compliment you on the splendid publicity you have carried out. It is most excellent."[18]

All of this activity by Ronald, Wilson, and the others was only a prelude to the major accomplishment of the summer and fall — gaining the

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14. Rowley, 142, 150, 151-152.
15. Ronald to Wilson, 19 July 1932, Wilson Papers; *Evening Huronite*, 20 July 1932.
16. Ronald to Wilson, 13 August 1932 and 30 July 1932, Wilson Papers.
17. Ronald to Wilson, 13 and 30 August 1932; copy of letter to W.R. Ronald from Arthur Capper, 13 August 1932, Wilson Papers.
18. Wilson to Ronald, 5 September 1932, Wilson Papers.

support, albeit indirectly stated, of Roosevelt. Wilson submitted a lengthy memo to the Roosevelt camp, which became the basis for Roosevelt's September farm policy speech in Topeka. (It is both significant and curious that it was the Democrats with whom the Domestic Allotment Committee made the greatest inroads, given that most of the committee's members, including Wilson and Ronald, were Republicans.)[19]

Roosevelt's much-anticipated farm policy speech was given on 12 September, listing, in general terms, six points necessary for a good farm policy. The speech was deliberately vague, not naming "domestic allotment," so as to "win Midwest support without waking up Eastern business interests who were not sympathetic to such a plan."[20]

Not surprisingly, Ronald gave the Topeka speech prominent coverage in his *Republican*, editorializing that Roosevelt's plan was indeed the domestic allotment approach. The day of Roosevelt's speech, Ronald wrote to Wilson to report on "the celebration" in his newspaper's office and to praise Wilson for his "wonderfully done work with Governor Roosevelt to bring this result."[21]

There was an uncertain path to the November election, with the Domestic Allotment Committee soft-pedaling its very direct connection to Roosevelt, for political reasons. The committee members even worried how solid Roosevelt's support was for their plan and at times even grew irritated with one another. Wilson at one point asked Ronald to tone down some of his editorial comments.[22]

On the whole, however, Wilson deeply appreciated the publicity efforts of the sometimes too-blunt and undiplomatic Ronald, and Ronald continued to acknowledge Wilson's "splendid work," especially with farm organizations and cooperatives. However, in some of his letters to others involved in the efforts for domestic allotment, Wilson wrote candidly of Ronald's being "an aggressive chap who gets by well with some people but unfortunately antagonizes others."[23]

As the 1932 political campaign neared its conclusion, Ronald continued his newspaper's vigorous editorial criticism of Hoover Administration farm policies and support of Roosevelt's views, seeing in Roosevelt, "a cheering ray of hope, the first signs of the dawning of a new day for agriculture." Ronald

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19. Wilson to Henry Morgenthau, 22 August 1932, Morgenthau to Wilson, 30 August 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library; Rowley, 161.

20. *Republican*, 14 September 1932; Raymond Moley, *After Seven Years* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1939), 41-45.

21. *Republican*, 15 September 1932; Ronald to Wilson, 14 September 1932, Wilson Papers.

22. Wilson to Ronald, 15 September 1932; Ronald to Wilson, 13 October 1932; Wilson to Ronald, 11 October 1932, Wilson Papers.

23. Ronald to Wilson, 17 October 1932; Wilson to Chester C. Davis, 15 September 1932, Wilson Papers.

found Hoover's farm policy speech at Des Moines "a painful disappointment," saying that it offered farmers nothing.[24]

Thus, Ronald's editorial endorsement of Roosevelt on 29 October, his first editorial departure from the Republican Party, was hardly surprising. Ronald also endorsed Progressive Republican Norbeck for reelection to the Senate. Anticipating that readers might be puzzled both by this split endorsement and by his support of a Democrat for President, Ronald wrote that both men were "Progressive" and believe "that the wealth created in this nation should be divided as fairly as possible so as to prevent depressions. . . .It [the paper] will continue to support Progressives in politics, regardless of party."[25]

Both Roosevelt and Norbeck carried South Dakota in the nationwide Roosevelt sweep, Roosevelt with an 84,000-vote margin and Norbeck by 26,000 votes.[26]

Exchanging letters at campaign's end, Roosevelt thanked Ronald for "the great energy and intelligence you have been bringing to bear on this question," and Ronald congratulated FDR on his expected election and spoke of the difficulties in getting farm organizations to agree on an agricultural policy. "It is virtually impossible to bring these leaders into agreement," Ronald wrote, adding, "The farmer is an incorrigible individualist and this is reflected in the farm organizations."[27]

While the Domestic Allotment Committee had won Roosevelt's support, it would still be a long journey from the November election to the final enactment of the Triple-A farm bill in May 1933. Discouragement and pessimism again permeated the air, first in the "Lame Duck" session of the old Congress in December 1932, and then in the new Congress which met in February 1933. The inauguration of Roosevelt was not until 4 March. Efforts

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24. *Republican*, 15 September and 15 October 1932. Interestingly, Ronald later wrote a bylined piece telling how Hoover had almost endorsed domestic allotment during the campaign. According to Ronald, after Roosevelt's Topeka speech in which he had not actually used the phrase, "domestic allotment," even though that was what he was endorsing, some advisors urged Hoover to upstage Roosevelt and endorse the plan by name in his farm policy speech. After checking with legal advisors, Hoover had reportedly written the plank into his speech. At Chicago, however, the Hoover campaign was joined by ex-Congressman Sydney Anderson of Minnesota, by that time working for General Mills, and a large GOP contributor. By the time Hoover reached Des Moines to give the speech, Ronald wrote, the domestic allotment reference had disappeared, and, in fact, Hoover condemned all such proposals as "patent medicine." Ronald claimed that he had "physical evidence" of the deletion of domestic allotment from the Hoover speech, a claim corroborated in a letter Ronald had written to Wilson in February 1933. *Republican*, 11 May 1933, and Ronald to Wilson, 25 February 1933, Wilson Papers.

25. *Republican*, 29 October 1932.

26. Gilbert C. Fite, *Peter Norbeck: Prairie Statesman* (Columbia: Universty of Missouri Press, 1948), 189.

27. Roosevelt to Ronald, 26 October 1932; Ronald to Roosevelt, 2 November 1932, Roosevelt Library, President's Personal File, 74.

to pass a domestic allotment bill failed in both sessions. Almost more important was the selection of the Secretary of Agriculture. Wilson and Ronald lobbied for the appointment of Henry A. Wallace of Iowa, with whom they had worked since the preceding April in the domestic allotment cause.[28]

Wallace was, indeed, chosen Secretary during this interim, and Ronald continued his vigorous nationwide publicity efforts on behalf of domestic allotment. He wrote articles for both *Current History* and *Congressional Digest*. But perhaps the greatest testimony to Ronald's efforts at publicity — not only bringing the domestic allotment concept to public attention but keeping it in the consciousness of political, farm, and business leaders — was a February 1933 staff-written article in *Fortune*. "Like technocracy," it stated, "Domestic Allotment has rocketed in the space of a few months from an esoteric theory to the status of front page news." In the article, not wholly sympathetic to Roosevelt farm policy, was an interview with Ronald, outlining his reasons for support of domestic allotment, as well as interviews with eleven other key persons in farm policy matters. Ronald had started working with *Fortune* editor Dwight MacDonald in December, at one point sending him copies of his booklet of *Republican* editorials, "A Sound Solution to the Farm Problem," along with his interview statement for the February article.[29]

Ronald's publicity efforts also included his giving speeches on domestic allotment beyond South Dakota including appearances in Omaha at a Chamber of Commerce meeting and at the Nebraska Bankers Association. Late in 1932, Ronald reported to Wilson that *Editorial Research Reports* would publish a special issue on the farm problem, and he also referred to negotiations with Henry Luce of *Time* magazine for favorable publicity there. Ronald also apparently continued his earlier strategy of news releases to the Associated Press. His own *Republican* in mid-February 1933 carried an AP story with a Houston, Texas, dateline, reporting that Ronald's idea to have states administer the domestic allotment plan was being considered by the U.S. Senate — a story obviously generated by a Ronald press release.[30]

In what Wilson described to Ronald as this "complicated and difficult" time between the election and the beginning of Roosevelt's inauguration, Wilson did achieve a major coup in helping to negotiate agreement among the contentious farm organization leaders to support domestic allotment. The remarkable nature of the unanimous farm organization vote for domestic allotment can be ascertained from the February 1933 *Fortune* magazine article. What the magazine termed as "the most representative group of farm leaders ever assembled in the United States" conferred in private

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28. Ronald to Roosevelt 20 December 1932, Roosevelt Library, President's Personal File, 74.

29. "Bounty," *Fortune*, February 1933, 43, 45; Ronald to Dwight MacDonald, 19 December 1932, Wilson Papers.

30. Ronald to Wilson, 5 November 1932, 21 December 1932, Wilson Papers; *Republican*, 18 February 1933.

> with Henry Morgenthau, Jr., publisher of the *American Agriculturalist* and FDR's right hand man for farm matters. When the doors were unlocked, a political miracle had come to pass: the various farm organizations had come to an agreement. They would unite in support of Domestic Allotment.[31]

In January and February 1933, Ronald spent time in Washington while Wilson stayed in Montana. Ronald testified in late January in support of domestic allotment before the Senate Agriculture Committee, of which Norbeck was a member, and was asked by the committee to draft a bill for its consideration. Always staying in touch with both Wilson and Wallace, and meeting with Rexford Tugwell of the incoming Roosevelt administration in New York, Ronald coordinated his drafting of a bill with a press release explaining what he was doing. But despite Ronald's best efforts with the Agriculture Committee, the committee's efforts seemed diffused. Norbeck at one point wired Ronald that attendance at committee sessions was dropping off and that members seemed confused about the bill.[32]

At last, Roosevelt was inaugurated, delivering an address, which in the words of a Ronald editorial, "proved him not only a President, but more important, a *leader*." The new administration almost immediately affirmed its commitment to agricultural policy reform by having new Agriculture Secretary Wallace call the first National Farm Conference in Washington, D.C., 9 and 10 March coinciding with the start of the special "hundred days" session of Congress. Ronald was the only nonfarmer to participate in that and the subsequent three National Farm Conferences.[33]

The early March 1933 National Farm Conference, called by Wallace, brought together forty farm leaders, including representatives of the three major groups — the Farm Bureau (long friendly to domestic allotment), the Grange, and even the Farmers Union, whose leader John Simpson had been hostile to domestic allotment developments, despite courting of him by Ronald, Wilson, and others. The Union was represented at the Farm Conference by a Kansas Republican Congressman.

The New Deal strategy was clear: first, get the farm organizations to agree on a plan, and then, with this united front, present the plan to Congress. Wallace told the group, "Once you agree on a plan, the battle for relief is half

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31. Wilson to Ronald, 30 December 1932, Wilson Papers; Richard S. Kirkendall, *Social Scientists and Farm Politics in the Age of Roosevelt* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1966), 51; "Bounty," 117.
32. Ronald to Wilson, 15 February 1933, Wilson Papers; Norbeck to Ronald, 15 February 1933, Norbeck Papers, University of South Dakota, Vermillion.
33. *Republican*, 6 and 10 March 1933; Ronald, "In the Vortex of the Farm Problem," 31.

won — and, if necessary you should be locked in conference rooms until you agree."[34]

Ronald was selected as chair of a five-member committee to meet with Roosevelt and Wallace to offer several suggested plans of relief and to "seek guidance from the President on the type he considers most workable."[35] Ronald's selection could be ascribed to his being the only nonfarm group participant in the National Conference — thus independent of factional interests — as well as to his skill as a writer. Both factors helped him pull together diverse farm organization viewpoints.

It was not until 12 May 1933, that the Agricultural Adjustment Act, embodying the domestic allotment approach, was signed by President Roosevelt. In the words of Richard Kirkendall, Congress had "resisted the desire for quick action."[36]

The day before, the *Evening Republican* not only told of passage of the farm bill, but, in an article by Malcolm Ronald, detailed for the first time to the newspaper's readers, the efforts of his father on behalf of the farm legislation. The newspaper exploited promotional opportunities, running an in-house advertisement displaying the key features of the new farm bill, and news stories proclaiming Ronald's coverage of the National Farm Conference. The paper promised "authentic and advance inside information" on the new farm bill as its enactment got underway.[37]

Epilogue

Less than a year after the Triple A became law, Ronald changed his newspaper's name from *Republican* to *Republic*, literally sawing the "an" off the nameplate, and thereby acknowledging what he had been doing for years with his policy of editorial independence from the Republican Party and movement to more progressive positions. A front-page editorial explained the change: "Inasmuch as the paper has been strictly independent in politics. . ., the name *Evening Republican* was a misnomer. . . It [the paper] will continue to take advantage of every opportunity to do more for its readers not only in the way of providing a newspaper for them, but also by championing any and all worthy proposals for a better and more prosperous South Dakota.[38]

Inevitably, Ronald is compared to William Allen White of Kansas, with whom Ronald had a brief exchange of letters in 1940 about farm policy matters. Sally Foreman Griffith found in White a practitioner of the community booster ethos that "addressed the need in newly created towns for both economic growth and social order." White became a "community leader," as did Ronald, and like Ronald, was a political progressive. Ronald, like White, was part of the

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34. *Republican*, 10 and 11 March 1933.
35. Ibid., 11 March 1933.
36. Kirkendall, 56.
37. *Republican,* 11 May 1933.
38. *Daily Republic*, 19 March 1934.

shift of editors and their newspapers from party organs to political independence, claiming thereby "to represent the people."[39] Both editors had national impact, although in varying ways and to differing degrees.

Ronald's vigorous actions on behalf of the Agricultural Adjustment Act can be viewed from the perspective of his journalistic activism on behalf of his community. In one of the first editorials he wrote after buying the *Republican* late in 1909, he had cited the "duty" of newspapers to serve as exponents for their communities. "No institution has a larger interest in seeing its community prosper and grow than does the newspaper, for the volume of its business bears a fixed relation to the volume of the city's business." Over the years, his paper supported fund drives for hometown Dakota Wesleyan University, paving and lighting city streets, and candidates in state primary elections.[40] Ronald, in becoming an agricultural activist, had broadened his definition of "community" to that of the well-being of agriculture as a whole, a well-being he long regarded as his most important editorial and political concern.

But Ronald was far more than a typical community booster editor. In a number of his editorial positions during his years of editorship, Ronald took positions at odds with prevailing opinions. In the days of the emergence of the agrarian protest movement, the Nonpartisan League, Ronald not only supported many League positions editorially, but also provided news space for coverage of their activities — making him one of the few South Dakota editors publicly sympathetic to the League.[41]

The emergence of the somewhat radical League during World War I, a time of considerable national hysteria, had tested Ronald's belief in civil liberties. Many League leaders in South Dakota had spoken out against involvement in the war and to some degree, the Mitchell editor was caught up in the prevailing hysteria, writing at one point that the war was "no time to test the right of free speech." In addition, he vigorously supported the South Dakota bill to outlaw the teaching of the German language.[42]

In spite of such positions, Ronald did support the right of the Nonpartisan League to hold its meetings and deplored the acts of mob violence being used by local defense council members to break up such meetings. At one point, Ronald sharply criticized his longtime ally, Peter Norbeck, for vacillating on the right-to-meet issue.[43]

Thirty years later, the Mitchell editor again rejected the hysteria of anti-communism in the Cold War and strongly supported the right of unpopular viewpoints to be expressed, this time those of Henry Wallace and his 1948 Progressive Party. Ronald did not support Wallace for President, but he strongly criticized the Republican party, and in particular, Karl Mundt, South Dakota's

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39. Sally Foreman Griffith, *Home Town News: William Allen White and the* Emporia Gazette (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 6-7, 241.
40. *Republican*, 3 November 1909, 28 February 1912, and 26 August 1914 .
41. *Republican*, 13 March and 6 April 1917.
42. Ibid., 19 September 1917 and 20 March 1918.
43. Ibid., 19 March 1919, 9 October 1918, 5 March 1918, 1 and 3 October 1918.

representative and later senator, for their exploitation of the anti-Communist theme. He strongly defended Wallace's right to speak, condemning an incident during Wallace's campaign through North Carolina in 1948 in which Wallace was forced to discontinue speaking. "If Wallace is not permitted to speak openly and freely," Ronald declared, "the right of all to do so will be jeopardized." Ronald was always keenly aware of the freedom and responsibility held by the press. Writing in *Nieman Reports* that same year, he said that "publishers are missing tremendous opportunities. . .to make their papers accomplish more than merely getting off the press each day."[44] Ronald missed few such opportunities.

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44. Ibid., 27 July 1948, 4 and 31 August 1948. Ronald, "A Publisher Speaks His Mind," *Nieman Reports*, April 1948.

Bibliographic Essay

Mencken: Magnificent Anachronism

By S.L. Harrison

Henry Louis Mencken was a man of contradictions. His intelligence, energy, and ambition make him one of the most successful newspaper figures of all time, while his politically incorrect commentary startles the modern reader. The body of literature by and about him is extensive and growing by the year.

H. L. Mencken, dead for almost four decades and who last wrote for a daily newspaper a half-century ago, shows no signs of fading into oblivion. Since 1989, five major books of Henry Louis Mencken's writings have been published. In 1991, a collection of his newspaper stories was published. In 1994, another major biography appeared; more than a dozen have been published, the first in 1925.[1] Two more are in preparation. A new collection of his writings, many in book form for the first time, *A Second Mencken Chrestomathy* (largely selected by the author before his incapacitating stroke and recently discovered), was published in 1995.[2] Mencken's first gathering of his "unobtainable writings," *Chrestomathy* in 1949, reissued in 1982, remains in print with healthy sales of more than 50,000 copies.[3]

Interest was stimulated with the unsealing of Mencken's papers by his literary executor, the Enoch Pratt Free Library.[4] The first major work from those

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1. A listing of Mencken biographies and works in print follows this essay.
2. H. L. Mencken, *A Second Mencken Chrestomathy,* Terry Teachout, ed. (New York: Knopf, 1995). Teachout, who discovered the manuscript prepared by Mencken for this collection, is writing a Mencken biography.
3. H. L. Mencken, *A Mencken Chrestomathy* (New York: Vintage/Random House, 1982). (Mencken as author hereafter cited HLM.)
4. Mencken spent thousands of dollars for hundreds of blue buckram volumes with sealed diaries and papers stipulating specific access and publication. His estate assured compliance and stewardship by the Trustees of the Enoch Pratt, in Baltimore. The New York Public Library holds extensive Mencken materials as do a number of universities, including Yale, Princeton, Harvard, and Dartmouth College.

resources, Charles Fecher's *Diary of H. L. Mencken* (1989),[5] revealed Mencken's hitherto private opinions and provoked extensive controversy. The National Press Club debated whether to bar Mencken's name from its library, a reaction that would have delighted him. A number of prominent newspaper people with impressive literary credentials came to Mencken's defense, including Russell Baker, Jonathan Yardley and William Manchester.[6] In 1991, a collection of Mencken's best newspaper work, spanning a half-century, was published.[7]

Additional private material focusing on his magazine career was published in 1993, Mencken's *My Life as Author and Editor.*[8] The first biography to benefit from the long-embargoed Mencken papers was Hobson's *Mencken: A Life* (1994).[9] The final trove of private papers, dealing with Mencken's newspaper recollections, *Thirty-five Years of Newspaper Work* (1994), finally appeared.[10] Six major books in seven years signals uncommon interest.

Is Mencken merely an anachronism, or genuinely worthy of investigation and inquiry? Mencken's journalistic contributions, his critical writing, and his seminal influence on letters is enthusiastically recognized by historians and scholars but generally neglected in journalism classrooms. H. L. Mencken (1880-1956) was a major national figure through the middle of this century: newspaperman, primarily with the Baltimore Sunpapers; magazine editor *(Smart Set* and *The American Mercury)*; literary critic, political commentator, and humorist; philologist *(The American Language)*; and author of more than thirty books.[11] This essay examines the body of literature by and

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5. HLM, *The Diary of H.L. Mencken,* Charles A. Fecher, ed. (New York: Knopf, 1989). Fecher, editor of *Menckeniana* and author of *Mencken: A Study of His Thought* (New York: Knopf, 1978), concluded that the contents reveal "clearly and unequivically: that Mencken was an anti-Semite." *Diary,* xix.

6. Mencken, an outspoken iconoclast, shocked a generation unfamiliar with his scathing style. Charges of anti-Semitism distressed admirers: Russell Baker, "Prejudices Without the Mask," *New York Times*, 13 December 1989, 31A; Jonathan Yardley, "In Defense of Mencken," *Miami Herald,* 17 December 1989, 7M; William Manchester, "Letters," *New York Times Book Review,* 4 February 1990, 33; S.L. Harrison, "Mencken Redoux," *Journal of American Culture* 13 (Winter 1990), 17-22.

7. HLM, *The Impossible H.L. Mencken: A Selection of His Best Newspaper Stories,* Marion E. Rodgers, ed. (New York: Anchor/Doubleday 1991). Rodgers, editor of HLM, *Mencken and Sara: A Life in Letters* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1987), is writing a Mencken biography.

8. HLM, *My Life as Author and Editor,* Jonathan Yardley, ed. (New York: Knopf, 1993).

9. Fred C. Hobson, *Mencken: A Life* (New York: Random House, 1994), is author of *Serpent in Eden: H.L. Mencken and the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974).

10. HLM, *Thirty-Five Years of Newspaper Work: A Memoir by H.L. Mencken,* Fred Hobson, Vincent Fitzpatrick, and Bradford Jacobs, eds. (Baltimore: John S. Hopkins University Press, 1994)

11. Identification of Mencken books in print follows this essay. Detailed bibliographic information is found in Betty Adler, *H.L.M.: The Mencken*

about H.L. Mencken in an effort to acquaint contemporary readers with his work. A great deal of his writings remain in print; a great deal more is being written about him. This essay is a brief overview of his work and books relating to him.

Despite his stature as a newspaperman, Mencken is little known to journalism students. His literary influence in twentieth-century America, vouchsafed by critics like Edmund Wilson, Walter Lippmann, and Joseph Wood Krutch,[12] is duly noted in college and university literature classes. Perhaps Mencken's absence in journalism classrooms, despite interest elsewhere, may be explained by the fact that his newspaper career began at the turn of the century and flowered before World War I, then reemerged only to disappear by the onset of the Great Depression. Mencken, an unparalleled iconoclast constantly embroiled in controversy, took a dim view of American journalism generally. Moreover, he routinely described journalism academics as "fifth rate" or "decayed editorial writers" or "unsuccessful reporters."[13] He held journalism schools in low regard:

> But these seminaries, so far, show two palpable defects. On the one hand, they are seldom manned by men of any genuine professional standing, or of any firm notion of what journalism is about. On the other hand, they are nearly all too easy in their requirements for admission. Probably half of them, indeed, are simply refuges for students too stupid to tackle the other professions. They offer snap courses, and they promise quick jobs. The result is that the graduates coming out of them are mainly second-raters — that young men and women issuing from the general arts courses make better journalistic material.[14]

If any of these comments hold true (and some do), little likelihood exists that these sentiments will be discussed in today's classrooms. Mencken was a debunker who battled against mediocrity. He also happily attacked

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Bibliography (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1961) and *H.L.M., The Mencken Bibliography: A Ten-Year Supplement, 1962-1971* (Baltimore: Enoch Pratt Free Library, 1971); Recent entries are in Vincent Fitzpatrick, *H.L. Mencken, The Mencken Bibliography: A Second Ten-Year Supplement, 1972-1981* (Baltimore: Enoch Pratt Free Library, 1986) and citations in *Menckeniana* (Enoch Pratt). Also helpful is Allison Bulsterbaum, *H.L. Mencken: A Research Guide* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988).

12. William Nolte, *H.L. Mencken: Literary Critic* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1966) and the comments by Edmund Wilson, "H.L. Mencken," *New Republic,* 1 June 1921, 1-13; Walter Lippmann, "H.L. Mencken," *Saturday Review of Literature* , 11 December 1926, 413-414; Joseph Wood Krutch, "This Was Mencken: An Appreciation," *Nation,* 11 February 1956, 109-110.

13. HLM, "The New York Sun," *A Second Chrestomathy,* 363.

14. HLM, "Journalism in America," *The American Scene: A Reader.* Huntington Chairns, ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), 256.

hypocrisy, Christian fundamentalists, and Puritanism, taboo topics today on many college campuses. A number of the nation's sovereign states still endorse anti-Darwinian legislation and books are regularly banned. Mencken's defense of First Amendment freedoms is often interpreted as attacks on religion — all controversial topics best avoided in today's politically-sensitive classrooms.

Few of the present generation know Mencken or his work. Nevertheless, he continues to enchant a significant audience. A number of Mencken's contemporaries rate a footnote in journalism history or a biography or two. But none of the newspaper giants of his day — William Randolph Hearst, Herbert Bayard Swope, Franklin P. Adams, Heywood Broun, or a half-dozen others — attract the continuing attention of writers and biographers. Mencken's accomplishments included success and recognition in editing, writing, criticism, and scholarship — any one of which merits success for any individual. He excelled in all.

Unquestionably, the best way to know Mencken is to read him. Cooke's *The Vintage Mencken*, with a representative range of HLM's writings, provides a provocative entry.[15] A compact introduction to Mencken's life and works is available in Fitzpatrick's well-written biography.[16] "The Sage of Baltimore" is portrayed in Dorsey's *On Mencken*.[17] Mencken's boyhood memoir, *Happy Days* (1940),[18] captures his love affair with the City of Baltimore; he lived almost his entire life in the same house.[19] Those early years formed his lifelong views and prejudices.

As a boy, he read voraciously and played at being a newspaperman; he was awed by the presses of a county weekly, the *Ellicott City Times*, during vacation summers. After graduating from high school in 1896, he declined college and toiled at the family cigar business. After his father's death, Mencken finally landed a job from editor Max Ways with the *Baltimore Morning Herald* in February 1899. His autobiography continues with a rollicking and mostly factual recounting of those years in *Newspaper Days, 1899-1906* (1941).[20] Mencken was diligent. He kept his tobacco-selling job for some months, regularly putting in ten- and twelve-hour days for the *Herald*. He had "been bustling with literary ardors" before 1895 and described his newspaper work as

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15. HLM, *The Vintage Mencken*, Alistair Cooke, ed. (New York: Vintage/Random House, 1955). Cooke notes all original sources and dates of publication and his introduction is excellent. The portrayal of Mencken is illuminating in Alastair Cooke, *Six Men* (New York: Knopf, 1977).
16. Vincent Fitzpatrick, *H.L. Mencken* (New York: Ungar/Continuum, 1989); Fitzpatrick is the assistant curator for the Enoch Pratt's Mencken Room.
17. John Dorsey, ed., *On Mencken* (New York: Knopf, 1980), especially, Huntington Cairns, "Mencken in Baltimore," 51-83.
18. HLM, *Happy Days, 1880-1892* (New York: Knopf, 1940). The first of his autobiographical trilogy, much of which appeared in *The New Yorker*, was encouraged into print by Mencken's good friend, editor Harold Ross.
19. He came to 1524 Hollins Street, site of The Mencken House, when three years of age. During his marriage, 1930-35, to Sara Powell Haardt, they lived on nearby Cathedral Street.
20. HLM, *Newspaper Days: 1899-1906* (New York: Knopf, 1943).

"the maddest, gladdest, damndest existence ever enjoyed."[21] As a newspaperman, he was exceptional: by 21, Sunday editor; by 23, city editor; by 24, managing editor; by 25, editor-in-chief. His newsgathering heroics when the Baltimore fire struck on 6 February 1904 are legendary. Mencken exerted extraordinary efforts to publish his burned-out newspaper, first from Washington and then Philadelphia. He was a boy wonder, supposedly working without sleep for three days (a myth that Mencken abetted).[22] He was "sold down the river"[23] in 1906 when the paper folded and he joined the *Baltimore Sunpapers* as *Sunday Sun* editor — a relationship that endured for fifty years.[24]

Mencken thought of himself as a newspaperman; it was the title he liked best. The third volume of his autobiographic trilogy, *Heathen Days, 1890-1936* (1943),[25] deals with his newspaper exploits. The Sunpapers provided Mencken wide latitude; with no reporting duties and few managerial chores, he was free to write a column, at first daily, and articles that afforded him outlet for assaults on American cultural icons. Bode's *The Young Mencken* includes generous examples of his formative work.[26] His literary influences, Shaw especially, were apparent.[27] By 1908, he had produced three books: *Ventures into Verse; George Bernard Shaw: His Plays,* and a translation *The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche.*[28] Like Shaw, HLM's targets were the conventional orthodoxies of his time. Nietzsche's Superman, the elitist, became a leitmotif in much of Mencken's criticism.

Mencken, not so much an original thinker as an extraordinary prose craftsman, synthesized and embellished. But his criticism of Shaw was the first

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21. Ibid., ix.

22. Ibid., "Fire Alarm," 276-300. An unbiased, factual account is in Harold A. Williams, *Baltimore Afire* (Baltimore: Schneidereith & Sons, 1954).

23. Ibid., 313 Mencken, however, did better than change jobs; he came aboard the *Sunpapers* with an upper-level editorship and stock in the A.S. Abell Corporation, owners of the newspapers, the *Sun,* the morning newspaper and the *Sunday Sun.* Mencken was instrumental in forming *The Evening Sun.* The three separate staffs were fiercely competitive.

24. Mencken was on salary with the *Sunpapers* until his incapacitating stroke in 1948 and was awarded a $7,500 annual pension until his death in 1956.

25. HLM, *Heathen Days, 1890-1936* (New York: Knopf, 1943). A sampling with selections from all three books is found in *The Days of H.L. Mencken: Happy Days, Newspaper Days, Heathen Days* (New York: Knopf, 1947); a complete one-volume collection is *H.L. Mencken's Days* (New York: Dorset, 1989).

26. HLM, *The Young Mencken: The Best of His Work,* Carl Bode, ed. (New York: Dial Press, 1973). This work, with useful chapter introductions, includes newspaper work up to 1917.

27. Darwin, Herbert Spencer and Thomas Henry Huxley, for example, as noted by Fitzpatrick, *H.L. Mencken,* 21.

28. HLM, *Ventures into Verse* (Baltimore: Marshall, Beck & Gordon, 1903), a collection of his poetry (that owed a great deal to Kipling) published mostly in his newspapers' pages; *George Bernard Shaw: His Plays* (Boston: Luce, 1905); and his translation and commentary, *The Philosophy of Friedrich Neitzsche* (Boston: Luce, 1908).

ever undertaken.[29] Clear parallels can be seen between Shaw and Mencken: both were journalists, both mounted frontal attacks on similar subjects, both were elitists of the finest sort, and both rejected democracy as a fraud.

Royalties were meager; all of HLM's early books were financial failures. Mencken, comfortably fixed, strove for literary reputation.[30] Recognition and opportunity for a national pulpit came in 1908, when Mencken became literary reviewer for *Smart Set,* a magazine of literary influence.[31] Little of this work is in print, but Nolte's *Smart Set Criticism,* provides a useful sampling.[32] One example, typical of the *Smart Set* commentary, is Mencken on "Government Theories":

> In every age the advocates of the dominant political theory seek to give it dignity by identifying it with whatever contemporaneous desire of man happens to be most powerful. In the days of monarchy, monarchy was depicted as the defender of the faith. In our present era of democracy, democracy is depicted as the only safe guardian of liberty. And the communism or supercommunism of tomorrow, I suppose, will be sold to the booboisie as the only true palladium of peace, justice, and plenty. All of these attempts to hook up cause and effect are nonsensical. Monarchy was fundamentally not a defender of the faith at all, but a rival and enemy of the faith. Democracy does not promote liberty; it diminishes and destroys liberty. And communism, as the example of Russia already shows, is not a fountain that gushes peace, justice, and plenty, but a sewer in which they are drowned.[33]

This period elicited some of HLM's best work. Nolte writes that Mencken is "credited quite rightly, with having been the leader of the forces for realism that triumphed so completely in the nineteen-twenties."[34] The *Smart Set* provided Mencken with an outlet for literary criticism of extraordinary scope.

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29. Eric Bentley, *Bernard Shaw,* 2d ed. (New York: Limelight Editions, 1967), 132.
30. Mencken, who throughout his lifetime carefully recorded his financial affairs, noted that by 1908 his freelance income exceeded his salary with the *Sunpapers*. S.L. Harrison, "Fiscal Mencken: An Accounting," *Menckeniana* 131(1995): 1-12.
31. A generous sampling of the magazine's content and outlook can be found in Carl R. Dolmetsch, *The Smart Set: A History and Anthology* (New York: Dial, 1966). Mencken, who had quarreled with his successors, refused to be included in this work.
32. HLM, *H.L. Mencken's Smart Set Criticism,* William H. Nolte, ed., 2d ed., (Washington, D.C.: Regnary/Gateway, 1987).
33. *The Smart Set*, February 1922, 26, in HLM, *Chrestomathy,* 152-153.
34. Nolte, *H.L. Mencken: Literary Critic,* 82. He further notes: "To view that special era of Mencken's , one must go through the files of *The Smart Set,* those before the nineteen-twenties, when Mencken reached the zenith of his power as a critic of ideas and institutions," 106.

His Baltimore-based newspaper column enabled Mencken to take on any individual or institution he chose (initially, the church was out of bounds, but when the clergy attacked him, that barrier dropped). This was a time of testing and, as *The Impossible H. L. Mencken* illustrates, notable newspaper articles emerged in the twenties and thirties.[35] Mencken, however, was exploring themes that occupied his attention for the next decade. He liked nothing more than to "stir up the animals" and did so with considerable gusto. For example, on college suicides:

> What I'd like to see, if it could be arranged, would be a wave of suicides among college presidents. I'd be delighted to supply the pistols, knives, ropes, poisons, and other necessary tools. A college student, leaping uninvited into the arms of God, pleases only himself. But a college president, doing the same thing, would give keen and permanent joy to great multitudes of persons. I drop the idea and pass on.[36]

Mencken's prose typically found life in several forms: the first version began in a newspaper column, then in a more developed essay as a magazine article, and eventually emerged in a book. Mencken's newspaper base was essential. In part, for that reason, he chose to remain in Baltimore and ventured to New York to deliver his magazine copy and collect mail, his mode of operation through his entire career. Meanwhile, he made useful connections with new and promising authors and became friends with Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, and later F. Scott Fitzgerald. His books still yielded little monetary success. A joint venture, *Men Versus The Men* (1910) was a commercial failure, as were *A Book of Burlesques* (1916) and *A Little Book in C Major* (1916).[37] Alfred A. Knopf produced Mencken's first financial success, *A Book of Prefaces* (1917).[38] The book was a literary success as well; this collection of newspaper and magazine pieces was, asserts Stenerson, nothing less than a "summons to rebellion" against the Puritanism influence that dominated American culture.[39]

This was a crucial period in Mencken's life. In 1914, he and George Jean Nathan gained joint editorship of *Smart Set* and turned it into a magnet for

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35. Of the 178 "best newspaper stories" cited, the earliest is dated 1904.
36. Excerpt from "Under the Elms," HLM, *Chrestomathy,* 133.
37. HLM and Rives La Monte, *Men Verses the Man: A Correspondence Between Rives La Monte, Socialist, and H.L. Mencken, Individualist* (New York: Henry Holt, 1910); HLM, *A Book of Burlesques* (New York: Lane, 1916). Royalties for *Burlesques* came to $96.68 for three years; *Little Book* did worse, $44.25; these incomes in Harrison, "Fiscal Mencken."
38. HLM, *A Book of Prefaces* (New York: Knopf, 1917), reprinted 5th ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1924). To get out of his contract with Lane, Mencken resorted to questionable practices that were something less than honorable, as Yardley observes in *My Life as Author,* xi.
39. Douglas C. Stenerson, *H.L. Mencken: Iconoclast from Baltimore* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 210.

opinion and good writing. Mention of the war raging in Europe was excluded from its pages. Mencken held a curious mental myopia in this regard. An earlier ill-fated joint-venture publishing enterprise, *Europe After 8:15* (1914), failed to consider the war's effect on society and was a dismal commercial failure.[40] His views on the war landed Mencken in serious trouble with the Baltimore Sunpapers. His violent anti-British, pro-German stance (he defended the sinking of the Lusitania by noting, correctly, that it carried contraband) embarrassed the newspaper and his "Free Lance" column was suspended in October 1915. Mencken, who never in his career questioned an editor's right to correct, revise, or kill copy, nevertheless forever saw this as an infringement on his right to free speech.[41] Mencken found another newspaper outlet, *The New York Mail,* and wrote a number of noteworthy pieces. "The Sahara of the Bozart," a goad to an entire region, the American South, was prime Mencken that attracted national attention and stirred reaction that continues to this day.[42] Mencken's attack on the South as a literary desert summarizes:

> Obviously, it is impossible for intelligence to flourish in such an atmosphere. Free inquiry is blocked by the idiotic certainties of ignorant men. The arts, save in the lower reaches of the gospel hymn, the phonograph and the political harangue, are all held in suspicion. The tone of public opinion is set by an upstart class but lately emerged from industrial slavery into commercial enterprise — the class of "bustling" business men, of "live wires," of commercial club luminaries, of "drive" managers, of forward-lookers, of right-thinkers — in brief, of third-rate Southerners inoculated with the worst traits of the Yankee sharper. One observes the curious effects of an old tradition of truculence upon a population now merely pushful and impudent, of an old tradition of chivalry upon a population now quite without imagination. The old repose is

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40. HLM, George Jean Nathan and Willard Huntington Wright, *Europe After 8:15* (New York: Lane, 1914). Wright preceded HLM and Nathan as editor of *Smart Set.* Mencken, who was ambitious and plotted to get control, made amends in his own mind and eventually found Wright a newspaper job with *The New York Post* through the help of Franklin P. Adams, who left for Pulitzer's *New York World* and helped Wright to his former *Post* position.

41. Mencken varied his verison of this episode from time to time. For the record he said that he was tired and needed a rest; other times, he was ill. But his remarks some thirty years later confirm his real view. *Mencken Speaking,* Caedmon SWC 1082, 1957, a recording made in 1948 at the Library of Congress with an unidentified *Sunpaper* colleague, Donald F. Kirkley, a theater critic for the *Sun.*

42. HLM, "The Sahara of the Bozart," *The New York Evening Mail,* 13 November 1917, in Rodgers, *Impossible,* 491-494. Echoes still reverberate in the south. Note Hobson, *Serpent in Eden.*

> gone. The old romanticism is gone. The philistinism of the new type of town-boomer Southerner is not only indifferent to the ideals of the Old South; it is positively antagonistic to them...[43]

The *Evening Mail* also ran the "Neglected Anniversary," Mencken's version of the introduction of the bathtub to the White House. The hoax was accepted as gospel by a number of reputable scholars and citations for its authenticity continue to this day.[44] Later Mencken confirmed the fabrication as "all buncombe" and took delight in pointing out those, especially academics, who accepted the bogus story as truth without question.[45]

Another side to Mencken's talents was his success with pulp fiction. He knew his markets. He and Nathan started and maintained several magazines, among them *Parisienne* and *Saucy Stories*. Usually, rejected stories served as the fare for these "louse" magazines, settings were changed to Paris and hack writers shaped the stories. In 1916, the partners, weary of the enterprise, sold their interest for $10,000 each; later in 1920, Mencken did the same with *Black Mask*, a successful detective-mystery magazine, for $20,000. This income relieved Mencken "from want permanently."[46] Thereafter, Mencken concentrated on books that added to his literary reputation.

Mencken produced two books in 1918, *Damn! A Book of Calumny* and *In Defense of Women*.[47] Reviews were satisfactory but sales and marketing were disappointing. Mencken's greatest publishing triumph, *The American Language* (1919)[48] grew from a series of newspaper articles stemming from his interest in language and a larger treatment in *Smart Set*. The book was an instant success and was enthusiastically received by critics. The work, Mencken's biggest moneymaker, sold well into the hundred-thousands. Bode calls it a "classic" without reservation.[49] Mencken scored another success in 1919 with a collection

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43. HLM, *Chrestomathy,* 194-195,
44. HLM, "A Neglected Anniversary," *New York Mail*, 28 December 1917, cited in Rodgers *Impossible,* 612-616. One text well illustrates HLM's love of hoaxes and elaborates on those taken in by the bathtub concotion. HLM, *H.L. Mencken's Un-Neglected Anniversary.* P.J. Wingate, ed. (Hockesse, Del.: Holly Press, 1980).
45. HLM, "Hymn to the Truth," *Chicago Sunday Tribune,* 25 July 1926, in Rodgers, *Impossible,* 617-620. For more, see HLM, *A Bathtub Hoax and Other Blasts & Bravos from the* Chicago Tribune, Robert McHugh, ed. (New York: Knopf, 1958).
46. Carl Bode, *Mencken* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969). 71. With a new introduction by Bode, "Mencken Revisited," (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).
47. HLM, *Damn! A Book of Calumny* (New York: Philip Goodman, 1918) and HLM, *In Defense of Women* (New York: Philip Goodman, 1918).
48. HLM, *The American Language: A Preliminary Inquiry into the Development of English in the United States* (New York: Knopf, 1919). Revised editions followed in 1921, 1923, and 1936. *Supplements I* (1945) and II (1948) followed; an abridged version of the 4th ed. and two *Supplements,* Raven I. McDavid Jr., ed., was published by Knopf, in 1963.
49. Bode, *Mencken,* 121.

of *Smart Set* commentaries. *Prejudices: First Series,* represents the best of his literary criticism, and was a success, so much so that five more volumes followed.[50] Farrell collected a generous sampling in *Prejudices: A Selection.*[51]

By 1920, Mencken was back with the *Evening Sun* and in 1923 ties with *Smart Set* ended. He embarked on a new magazine, backed by Alfred A. Knopf, the *American Mercury.* Editor Mencken treated social issues with a personal, specific point of view. He encouraged writers to "depict and interpret the America that is in being; not the America that might be or ought to be" and solicited the "quacks" who "give good shows and offer salubrious instruction if only in the immemorial childishness of mankind....to these austerely respectable quacks, in particular, loving attention has been given."[52] The *Mercury,* a literary and financial success, established Mencken, editorialized the *New York Times,* as the most powerful private citizen in America.[53]

Mencken was intelligent and ambitious, to be sure, and he had the energy and stamina ("I worked hard," he said) to take on several roles simultaneously. He was at once a successful newspaperman, recognized as one of the best, if not the best, in the nation; a distinguished and talked-about author and critic whose books sold well; and editor of a leading magazine. Any of these attainments would have been rewarding for anyone. Mencken, vigorous and enterprising, added to his stature in each of these endeavors in the 1920s.

After wartime feelings about him cooled, Mencken returned to the *Sunpapers* but "Free Lance" was not resurrected. A Monday column ("articles" that might appear on a Saturday) produced the best newspaper writing in America over a span of eighteen years, earned HLM national fame, and put the *Sun* in the top rank of American newspapers.[54] The paper and Mencken played a major, national role in the Scopes trial of 1925.

The Scopes "Monkey Trial" (the term is Mencken's) pitted Darwinian evolution against Christian fundamentalism and starred Williams Jennings Bryan, three-time Democratic presidential candidate and orator of "Cross of Gold" fame, against Clarence Darrow, the leading trial lawyer of the era.[55] Manchester's biography of Mencken, *Disturber of the Peace,* benefits from Mencken's

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50. HLM, *Prejudices: First Series* (New York: Knopf, 1919). Subsequent *Prejudices* collections include: *Second Series* (1920); *Third Series* (1922); *Fourth Series* (1924); *Fifth Series* (1926); *Sixth Series* (1927); and the final *Selected Prejudices* (1927).

51. HLM, *Prejudices: A Selection,* James T. Farrell, ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1959).

52. HLM, editorial guidance for the *American Mercury* in *The Writer's Market,* Aron M. Mathieu, ed. (New York: Writer's Digest, 1930), 13. When contributors failed to come through, Mencken would resort to pseudonyms, his most-frequent was Major Owen Hatteras; in all there were twenty-nine positively proved and fourteen probable ones. Huntington Cairns, HLM, *The American Scene,* 541.

53. Huntington Cairns, HLM, *The American Scene,* xxi.

54. Bode, *Mencken,* 205.

55. S.L. Harrison, "The Scopes 'Monkey Trial' Revisited: Mencken and the Editorial Art of Edmund Duffy," *Journal of American Culture* 17 (1994): 55-64.

narrative version of the events.[56] The trial, a stunt to gain publicity for an obscure Tennessee town, was orchestrated by Mencken with the backing of his newspaper into a national sensation. Mencken's manipulation is described by Williams in *The Baltimore Sun: 1837-1987.*[57] The Scopes trial, the major media frenzy of its day, was a sensational event that captured the attention of the nation. Mencken was a leading character. *Thirty-Five Years of Newspaper Work* adds Mencken's perspective.[58] With hundreds of press and film media attending, Mencken became the central figure and defendant John Scopes was virtually ignored ("Nobody gives a damn about that yap school teacher").[59] The proceedings gave Mencken a stage on which to display the "idiocies" of Fundamentalism, and his Sunpapers dispatches, Rodgers notes, included some of "the most brilliant in the history of journalism."[60] The issue was neither religion nor free speech; the trial was a Mencken-managed event. But Mencken filed copy unlikely to ever appear on page one in a general circulation metropolitan newspaper today:

> The so-called religious organizations which now lead the war against the teaching of evolution are nothing more, at bottom, than conspiracies of the inferior man against his betters. They mirror very accurately his congenital hatred of knowledge, his bitter enmity to the man who knows more than he does, and so gets more out of life...their membership is recruited, in the overwhelming main, from the lower orders (and) that no man of any education or human dignity belongs to them. What they propose to do at bottom and in brief, is to make the superior man infamous — by mere abuse if it is sufficient, and if it is not, then by law.[61]

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56. William L. Manchester, "The Infidel Scopes," *The Sage of Baltimore: The Life and Riotous Times of H.L. Mencken* (London: Melrose, 1952), 137-156. This and the American edition, published in 1950, is distinguished by an excellent introduction by Mencken's *Sunpaper* colleague, Gerald W. Johnson (Manchester, *Disturber of the Peace: The Life of H.l. Mencken*). The 2d edition, with Manchester's introduction and *Envoi*, (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), was published after Mencken's death. Manchester was selected by HLM as his biographer.

57. Harold A. Williams, *The Baltimore Sun: 1837-1987* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987). It was a situation, in fact, of the media and a newspaperman helping to manipulate the story they were reporting.

58. "Make Tennessee Forever Infamous," *Thirty-Five Years of Newspaper Work,* 136-149. Mencken reported on the event in "Inquisition," *Heathen Days,* 214-238.

59. The quote is in Manchester, 140, based on interviews with HLM, otherwise undocumented; compare Bode, "Mencken, Darwin, and God," *Mencken,* 264-278.

60. Rodgers, *Impossible,* 561.

61. HLM, "Homo Neanderthalensis," *Baltimore Evening Sun,* 29 June 1925, 1. reprinted in *The Impossible,* 562-65.

Following Scopes' expected conviction, Bryan died, and Mencken wrote a savage obituary, "Bryan, the Flycatcher."[62] Mencken begins:

> Has it been duly marked by historians that William Jennings Bryan's last secular act on this globe of sin was to catch flies? A curious detail and not without its sardonic overtones. He was the most sedulous fly-catcher in American history, and in many ways the most successful.

He concludes: "He came into life a hero, a Galahad, in bright and shining armor. He was passing out a poor mountebank."[63]

Mencken produced some of the finest newspaper writing during the Scopes trial of that or any other era, and Rodgers' *The Impossible Mr. Mencken* provides a baker's dozen of his stories filed under deadline that should be required reading in any reputable school of journalism.[64]

Mencken wrote elsewhere as well; a series of weekly essays for the *Chicago Tribune* (1924-1928) dealt mostly with literary matters — some of his best — with occasional forays into social issues.[65] But Mencken's primary interest now centered on politics. The 1920s supplied Mencken with grist for pungent and accurate appraisals of America's new direction. His political commentaries — more than seven hundred — that appeared in the *Evening Sun* are a valuable and vivid portrait of the people and events of that era. Moos' collection, *H.L. Mencken On Politics,* provides a rich selection for readers who, in these politically correct times, may be startled at the tone in political reporting.[66]

As editor of the *Mercury,* Mencken was at zenith, the most influential voice in American letters, described by Nolte as "a literary dictator."[67] A year after the Scopes trial, Mencken again made national news with his vigorous defense of First Amendment rights for the press. An attempt to ban the *Mercury* for a supposedly lascivious story is known as the "Hatrack" incident.[68] His blistering defiance of censorship of the *Mercury* in state and federal courts provided a signal victory over Comstockery and "morons" seeking to suppress

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62. Mencken's scathing obituary, first appeared in *The Evening Sun* and later somewhat revised in the *American Mercury*, is included in a number of his collected works.
63. HLM, "In Memoriam: W.J.B.," in *Chrestomathy,* 243-248.
64. "The Scopes Trial," *Impossible,* 560-641,
65. Bode, *Mencken,* 206.
66. HLM, *H.L. Mencken On Politics: A Carnival of Buncombe,* Malcolm Moos, ed. (New York: Vintage, 1960). Beyond journalism, these commentaries are valuable political history.
67. Nolte's assessment from "The Literary Critic," *On Mencken,* 196.
68. HLM, *The Editor, the Bluenose, and the Prostitute: H.L. Mencken's History of the "Hatrack" Censorship Case,* Carl Bode, ed. (Boulder, Col.: Roberts Rinehart, 1988).

the expression of ideas. Mencken, Manchester writes, "rose to the stature of a god."[69]

Increasingly, however, much of his attention waned from literary horizons to a wider range of social subjects, particularly politics. The *American Mercury* was the most influential magazine of that era and Mencken's role as its founder and editor is recorded in several useful sources. Bode's *Mencken* provides an unbiased account.[70] An assistant on the magazine, Charles Angoff, reveals an unflattering picture in *H.L. Mencken: Portrait from Memory.*[71] Knopf, owner of the *Mercury,* provides an intimate, less-biased insider's view of HLM in *On Mencken.*[72] Mencken delighted in his detractors, however. In 1928, he gleefully published a collection of invective directed toward him in *Menckeniana: A Schimpflexikon.*[73]

The declining fortunes of the *Mercury* and the erosion of Mencken's influence were related. The *Mercury,* with a targeted audience of 20,000 in 1924, soaring to 80,500 by 1926, faltered after the stock market crash of 1929. The onset of the Great Depression, which Mencken then and afterward dismissed as a mere financial fluctuation, lost readers who had more pressing concerns to occupy their attention. Mencken refused to recognize the cataclysmic implications of America's economic collapse and ignored new issues and challenges; he left the magazine in December 1933.

Mencken fell out of favor in the 1930s; iconoclasm, no longer fashionable, disappeared and his bellicosity became unpopular. He expressed scant concern for the ills brought on by the Depression and venomously opposed Franklin Roosevelt personally and the policies of the New Deal. His invective continued in the Sunpapers. Revisions for *The American Language* occupied him. *The Treatise on the Gods* (1930),[74] his first book except for the *Prejudices* series since *Notes on Democracy* (1926),[75] was a thoroughgoing dissection of religions that received good reviews and adequate sales. Still, it failed to hold the attention of a public more concerned with troubles closer to home. A collection of his newspaper coverage of the nominating conventions of 1932, *Making a*

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69. Manchester, *Sage,* 173.
70. Bode, *Mencken,* 207-263.
71. Charles Angoff, *H.L. Mencken: Portrait from Memory* (New York: Yoseloff, 1956), once HLM's disciple and later bitter enemy, wrote a biased and vindictive account of HLM in a working relationship that runs counter to most reminiscences. Undoubtedly, much of what is recounted was said, but Angoff, who took himself quite seriously, appears totally bereft of a sense of humor and unaware of when he was being baited. He was an ideal target, it seems, for HLM's jibes.
72. Alfred A. Knopf, "H.L. Mencken: A Memoir," an essay in Dorsey, *On Mencken,* 283-313.
73. *Menckeniana: A Schimpflexikon,* H.L. Mencken, ed. (New York: Knopf, 1928).
74. HLM, *Treatise on the Gods* (New York: Knopf, 1930).
75. HLM. *Notes on Democracy* (New York: Knopf, 1926).

President,[76] sold poorly. His only major book was collaboration on the publication of an historical overview of *The Sunpapers of Baltimore* (1937).[77]

In 1942 he produced a longtime project, *A New Dictionary of Quotations.*[78] Publication of his *Days* books in the 1940s and the satiric *Christmas Story*[79] introduced Mencken to a new generation. Mencken, benign and eminently readable without the invective, was acceptable to readers emerging from the Depression. His *Chrestomathy* and his last work, *Minority Report* (1958),[80] sustained Mencken as a literary presence.

With the release of Mencken's sealed papers, a new series of published works, bolstered with intimate knowledge of HLM's private observations and written commentary, revealed aspects unknown in his public writings.[81] Mencken, essentially a private person, nevertheless spent much time and money preparing his papers for housing in the Enoch Pratt and repositories elsewhere (to hedge against disasters, natural or otherwise), to be released at specified intervals for future examination.

Mencken's public version of his life and times available from the several *Days* books was written first for the *New Yorker.* Apparently, the fires had cooled and long-ago combats became distant memories. His diary and memoranda, however, revealed a dark side that remembered every encounter. His private papers, for the most part written at the time of passion and partisanship, promised to set the record straight and settle old scores.

Publication of his *Diary,*[82] covering 1930-1948, stimulated a storm of commentary when its contents implied (and its editor asserted) that Mencken was an anti-Semite, by today's standards a charge probably true. Defenders contend that Mencken is no more than a reflection of his time and origin. Mencken was a man of contradictions, personal and private. Publicly, he attacked without malice

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76. HLM, *Making a President: A Footnote to the Saga of Democracy* (New York: Knopf, 1932).

77. HLM, Gerald W. Johnson, Frank R. Kent and Hamilton Owens, *The Sunpapers of Baltimore: 1837-1937* (New York: Knopf, 1937).

78. HLM, *A New Dictionary of Quotations on Historical Principles from Ancient and Modern Sources* (New York: Knopf, 1942), a project begun with Angoff, who was paid for his contribution and then abandoned his collaborative role after disagreement with Mencken over sources.

79. HLM, *Christmas Story* (New York: Knopf, 1946), with an O. Henryesque ending reflected Mencken's aversion to Christmas; he was despondent and morose during the Holiday season and avoided merrymaking, convinced it was a bad-luck time for him.

80. HLM, *Minority Report: H.L. Mencken's Notebooks* (New York: Knopf, 1956), his last book completed before his 1948 stroke. His once-great admirer Edmund Wilson commented that HLM's "ideas, stated boldly, are stupid." Wilson was notably short of a sense of humor. Edmund Wilson, *The Fifties,* Leon Edel, ed. (New York: Ferrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1983), 364.

81. Something of Mencken's private life was disclosed with publication by one of his and Sara's friends (one of her former students), Sara Mayfield, *The Constant Circle: H.L. Mencken and his Friends* (New York: Delacorte, 1968).

82. HLM, *The Diary.* Of the total of 2,100 original manuscript pages, editor Charles Fecher explains that he pruned some 1,400; about one-third were published.

and evident enthusiasm all groups and beliefs, and usually made a convincing case. He was an elitist and class-conscious and his writings reflect that view. Mencken held unconcealed contempt for democracy and viewed with undisguised scorn most of its inhabitants without regard to color, class, or creed. He invented and embellished stereotypes. His views, amused and patronizing, infuriated large numbers of readers. Perhaps not surprisingly, his private views mirrored his public persona. He wrote from sincere, if narrow, beliefs.

The next harvest of the Mencken memoirs yielded his private comments as author and editor, 1914-1923.[83] Expectedly, the contents are a defense of his work and an assault on real and perceived enemies. Those seeking more ammunition for Mencken's antipathy toward Jews will find it; others will find interesting HLM's withering scorn for his inferiors (practically everybody). He was petty, driven, and ambitious and sought those who could help and dropped friends when they grew awkward or inconvenient. The portraits he draws are candid and without pity.

Mencken, the outspoken elitist, was perhaps mean-spirited. He could embrace a questionable code of ethics that enabled him to be less than honest in his dealing with a no longer-wanted publisher — a practice once admired as shrewd Yankee trading. To Mencken, it was a clever piece of chicanery. But times change and perhaps by today's standards Mencken is not a likable person. Yardley's editing presents Mencken unvarnished, without excuses.

Hobson's *Mencken: A Life*[84] includes new material dealing with Mencken's personal life and many readers will conclude that in his relations with women HLM was no gentleman. The charge today would be that Mencken was a womanizer of the worst sort. A number of female would-be contributors to his magazine evidently found themselves in his bed and unpublished. He attempted to suppress his letters to women and theirs to him. In many respects, Mencken clearly felt that his personal life was nobody's business and perhaps it is not. But he nevertheless attempted to alter the records, particularly regarding his relationships with women.

Hobson displays Mencken as a paradox: perhaps a private bigot but a public figure who entertained blacks in his dining room; an anti-Semite who warned against the eventual massacre of Jews; a critic who plumbed the philosophy of other writers but never expressed in depth his own. This most public of public men held a dark side of lonely aloofness.

Fittingly, Mencken's latest work centers on his career as a newspaperman, the role he relished. *Thirty-five Years of Newspaper Work*[85] deals with the years 1906-1941[86] at the Sunpapers of Baltimore and holds special

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83. HLM, *My Life as Author,* contains some 1,700 pages-plus and editor Jonathan Yardley notes that forty percent were published, approximately 700 pages.

84. Hobson, *Mencken,* elaborates on details in Bode, *Mencken.*

85. HLM, *Thirty-Five Years,* contained 2,748 pages and appendices, of which editors Fred Hobson, Vincent Fitzpatrick and Bradford Jacobs used forty-five percent, approximately 640 pages.

86. The date is significant. Mencken severed his writing chores with the newspaper in 1941, with the coming of World War II and for the same reasons that prompted his

interest for journalism students, teachers, newspaper journalists, and historians. (For Mencken's public record on newspapering, Lippman's collection of HLM's observation of newspapers and the people involved, *A Gang of Pecksniffs,* will prove enlightening.)[87] Mencken tells something of this career in *Newspaper Days* and *Heathen Days* but that was the public view, with no dirty laundry. *Thirty-five Years* provides an intriguing account of Mencken's career and continuing efforts to make the *Sun* a front-rank newspaper, the best in America. For a time the *Sun* was generally recognized as one of America's ten best newspapers. Mencken's failure to attain the stature he sought for the newspaper, however, is part of the reason for his chronicle of happenings major and minor in that frustrating pursuit, and the people whom he felt impeded his goal.

Mencken's private assessment of colleagues considered his friends could be brutal but illustrates that Mencken easily separated professional evaluations from purely personal feelings. He was a thoroughgoing professional and unforgiving toward others who, in his estimation, were not. Few people measured up to his personal work ethic. Personalities and office politics aside, contemporary readers will find this work rewarding for the commentary pertaining toward making a newspaper first-rate. A number of the shortcomings continue to require attention in the industry. Mencken scoffed when newspapering was referred to as a "profession" and was unyielding in his contempt for schools of journalism and the results they produced.[88]

His private papers reveal Mencken's frailties and foibles. Fecher's *Diary* introduced his deep prejudices; Yardley and Hobson demonstrate that Mencken was obsessed with his personal finances. He was almost pathological, noting and recording every penny of income and outgo with attentive and obsessive detail. He was frugal, but not ungenerous. Indeed, he gave money freely to many friends and thoughtfully provided gifts. He could demonstrate uncommon generosity but was niggardly with those closest to him.

Mencken followed a strict code of honor, according to his lights, but his own accounting of petty deceits and prevaricating maneuvers raises questions. He would not lie, but often did not tell the truth. He was not above elliptical and evasive reasoning to justify dubious behavior. He sought out those who could aid him and coldly dropped friends of long standing when they became bothersome. Often caring and considerate, he could be impervious to the effect his brusque manner had on those of lesser talent and blandly indifferent to adversities inflicted on others by fortune that they, unlike himself, failed to master. But Mencken the man is not the yardstick for Mencken the writer.

Journalism classes could benefit from a study of Mencken's work. Students would enjoy his *Newspaper Days,* as history and an appreciation of the

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departure in 1915; his pro-German bias proved embarrassing. Again, Mencken was ambivalent in giving reasons. In any event, he remained on the *Sunpaper* payroll.

87. HLM, *A Gang of Pecksniffs; And Other Comments on Newspaper Publishers, Editors, and Reporters,* Theo. Lippman, ed. (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, 1975).

88. Evidence abounds but note his comments in S.L. Harrison, "Meeting Mencken," *Menckeniana* 114 (1990): 4-5.

romance of what newspapering once was. Rodgers' collection of his newspaper stories in *The Impossible Mr. Mencken* is a treasure trove of good writing. *A Gang of Pecksniffs* contain acerbic commentary on ethics and newspapering; *Thirty-Five Years of Newspaper Work* shows the inner workings of a modern newspaper and efforts to improve. A good overall collective sampling of his work is found in Cooke's anthology, *Mencken.*

Mencken was a monumental colossus of prose production in America's literary world who failed to produce Literature and, for that omission, he is often neglected. But in a literary world of stars, Mencken was a constellation in the universe. He continues to be referred to, cited, and mentioned but these days rarely read. Academicians were often his favorite target, students his most ardent defenders. His future may lie with a new generation that appreciates his legacy.

Mencken's pungent and outrageous commentary on life and letters and American politics cannot be dismissed because he was objectionable, especially when measured by the current standards of acceptable behavior. His humor, much underrated in his time and virtually overlooked today, deserves recognition for its originality and creativeness.[89] Mencken ranks with Swift in his relentless satiric savaging of the body politic. No American writer except Mark Twain has managed to mount attacks cloaked with gentle humor and wound so deeply. But Twain was often irresolute; Mencken was relentless, unyielding. Mencken was a writer of astonishing versatility and anyone venturing into H. L. Mencken's unmatched world of prose comes away enriched by a genius with the written word. There was none better.

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1995 Presidential Address

A Better Organized, Faster, and Neutral Academic Organization

By Alf Pratte

Following is the text of an address delivered 28 September 1995 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, by the president of the American Journalism Historians Association to open the annual AJHA convention. Dr. Pratte is a professor of journalism at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Perhaps it has been because my role as AJHA president made me more sensitive to the issues, but I think most of us can agree that the past year has been one of the most intense and newsworthy ever as far as history in the headlines, in editorial pages, and over the airwaves and cable.

Since we were hosted by Sam Riley in Virginia last, history has been in the news due to the efforts of at least five special interest groups: Congress, outside lobbying organizations, the CD-ROM business, public relations practitioners, and historians. The events help remind us how important we are as scholars that at times need to serve as referees in a society that tends to polarize.

For starters, former chair of the National Endowment of Humanities Lynne V. Cheney charged that the proposed National Standards for U. S. History were distorting American history to make history "politically correct."[1]

Ms. Cheney's provocative accusations of the manipulation of history were picked up by various columnists, editorial writers, Congresspersons, and the public in an escalating debate that included nuggets of truth with mounds of misinformation. One result was that the proposed standards were rejected in a near unanimous Congressional vote.

Along with the ongoing controversy over the history standards, Congress played politics with historians when newly elected speaker Newt Gingrich hired and then fired Christina Jeffrey as historian for the speaker of the House of Representatives after charges that Professor Jeffrey was "a Nazi

1. Lynne V. Cheney, "The End of History," *Wall Street Journal*, 20 October 1994.

sympathizer."[2] She later wrote to media around the nation explaining how her position had been distorted by taking comments she had made years ago in hearings out of context and using them to turn her into something that the historical record did not confirm.

But our elected representatives were not the only ones concerned about history and historians during the past year. Outside lobbying groups such as the National Organization on Disability and others protested the fact that none of the three bas-reliefs or sculptures of the proposed memorial to President Franklin D. Roosevelt showed him with the wheelchair, crutches, braces, or cane he was forced to rely on for most of his life.

"Without question he (President Roosevelt) is the role model for the fifty million disabled people in this country," said a board member of the National Organization on Disability. "He lived his life in a wheelchair, and history should record it."[3]

One other example of lobbying, public relations groups trying to mold history to a special point of view, had national and international implications this past year. It was the stormy debate over the efforts by the Smithsonian Institution to provide a more complete discussion of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan fifty years ago by including new historical information in its display.[4]

As many of us are aware, because of media accounts, the issue was oversimplified, distorted, and blown out of proportion by articles that tended to polarize public opinion into two sides without recognizing, reporting, and explaining all the nuances and positions in between. The result, as many of us saw when we were in Washington for the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication conference, is an interesting but somewhat tepid display of this event.

The CD-ROM business helped to stir up a bit of a storm for historians this past year with Apple Computer's release of a controversial CD-ROM "Who Built America?"

The disk, a history of the United States between the years of 1876 and 1914, includes frank discussions on homosexuality, birth control, and abortion and has triggered an emotional controversy over the new media and history. According to Jeffrey A. Trachtenberg, the argument carries special emotional freight because many people believe CD-ROM histories are giving children a more vivid and direct taste of history than books ever could.[5]

"I think there is a much more passionate level of interest around interpretation of the past, and there is no doubt that technology will expand that

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2. Christina Jeffrey, "Playing Politics With History,"*Wall Street Journal,* 28 March 1995.

3. Meghan Mutchler, "Roosevelt Disability an Issue at Memorial," *New York Times,* 18 April 1995, A2.

4. Tony Cappaccio and Uday Mohan, "Missing the Target," *American Journalism Review,* 18 July/August 1995, 19-26.

5. Jeffrey A. Trachtenberg, "U.S. History One — A CD-ROM Stirs Up A Storm," *Wall Street Journal,* 10 February 1995, B1.

debate," believes Sandria Freitag, executive director of the 16,000-member American Historical Association.

"This is a three-dimensional means of dealing with the past that allows people to work with primary source materials and develop the critical thinking skills necessary to get meaning."[6]

The last of my selected samples of history in the news during the past year has to do with historians themselves. In particular, Thomas Sowell, a nationally syndicated columnist, believes that the American Historical Association is abusing the tax-exempt status given to philanthropic, scholarly, and other nonpolitical activities to actively lobby for various politically correct issues from AIDS to gender diversity.[7]

A member of the American Historical Association himself, Sowell warns that academic organizations such as AHA have the right to lobby like anyone else—if they pay taxes. But they can't have it both ways. If they are going to have tax exempt status, Sowell claims they have to discipline themselves to keep out of political issues.

My purpose in reviewing these major events of history and historians such as ourselves in the news over the past year is not an attempt to try to provoke this distinguished group which is now the largest single organization involved primarily in media history, and, I believe, the most important.

There are certainly reasons for us to become politically aware as well as politically active. We've seen that in the last few years as we have gone to bat to present evidence of the retention media departments around the country or to try to save important media historical records such as the Proceedings of the American Society of Newspaper Editors in volume form.

Any of you who know me and know my background as a political writer who left journalism to go into government and politics in Hawaii to help make a better world, know how active I am. During the early meetings of this organization I was among the those bombarding our group with resolutions urging AJHA involvement in nearly every issue that existed on this planet. I have continued to do so over the years. Fortunately, sounder minds have helped keep me and others such as myself in check and from passionately going too far beyond the legitimate issues AJHA must provide leadership for in regard to media history and its curriculum, and those issues that we must selectively avoid even though some of us want to be in the thick of it.

Because of the growing recognition by Congress of history in public policy, as well as the public and others ranging from the exploding public relations complex to the CD-ROM business, we need to continue to be cautious and selective in the issues we become involved in as an organization. I believe this is vital if AJHA is to grow beyond its present boundaries and be considered as a major neutral, credible source and purveyor of historical facts the public and mass media can depend on.

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6. Ibid.
7. Thomas Sowell, "Historians forget non-political past," *Rocky Mountain News,* 5 July 1995, 30A.

More than any other observation during this eventful year of historians in the news, the following quote summarizes the need for organizations such as the American Journalism Historians Association to become more and better involved in the work we love and do so well — historical research, teaching, publication, and promotion of what we find to a wider audience as well as scholars.

The quote came in the middle of an article on how an aggressive public relations campaign by the Air Force Association was able to politicize and reduce the Smithsonian Institution's effort at a full-fledged exhibit on the atomic bomb to a much lesser exhibit which some charge has oversimplified history and abdicated the opportunity to provide additional sides of this complex issue.

In emphasizing the success of the public relations campaign and the thwarted efforts of the Smithsonian scholars, the authors note the failure of historians such as ourselves to get into the fray at an early period with the facts. According to the authors:

"A **traditionally disorganized group,** historians entered the debate last fall — **much too late to influence public opinion**" (emphasis added).

In a nutshell, these two phrases, "traditionally disorganized group," getting into important historical debates "much too late to influence public opinion" are among the major continuing weaknesses of our organization and ones that we must constantly be working to overcome in the future if we are to realize our purpose and be taken more seriously by those beyond our own circle.

We must do better to transcend the growing army of public relations practitioners, lobbyists, politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen, and the trendy craze of political correctness interfering with our organizational responsibility to foster and provide facts for the public debate.

To do this we need to develop institutional methods to become better organized and to work quicker with the historical record before the misinformation promoted by the special interest groups becomes part of the media agenda and is accepted by the public.

During the next three days we will be privileged to hear much new original research, some of which may help to create new paradigms or change attitudes or kill myths. This is what we have been doing since we came into business at Southern Methodist University fourteen years ago.

We certainly deserve credit for what we have done during that period through our annual meetings, newsletters, *American Journalism,* and other publications and reports. But we need to do more if we are going to reach our goals and carry out our important responsibilities as neutral, credible historians.

It will be of little use if what goes on here during the next few days stays here in Tulsa. Our important findings and conclusions must be communicated to the broader audience, not only through publication in our journal, but through news releases, new technology and other methods. We must not only continue to do this, but we must learn how to coordinate more effectively and do it faster.

We have tried that a little during this past year through our education, resolutions, and public relations committees, and I commend those who have provided this outreach leadership. But we need to do more of this for ourselves and the broader community. I encourage each of you to think of these responsibilities and an expanded role for our organization in addition to your papers, panels, and networking. In particular, we need to continue with ongoing long-range planning that provides a new dimension with a full time staff to support those who make policy.

For those incoming officers and members of the board of directors, as well as directors who will be elected at our business meeting, I encourage each of you to focus on this organization and try to save your energies from the many competing organizations which I believe have tended to divide our loyalties at times from nudging AJHA to a greater role.

In conclusion, let me express my thanks to each of you for the confidence you have placed in me by allowing me to represent you as your president for the past year. It has been one of the highlights of my life and an experience I shall cherish forever.

Let me also voice appreciation to John Coward for his efforts hosting us. Also, to the officers and board of directors, particularly our past presidents Pamela Brown, Carole Sue Humphrey, and many others who helped encourage and train me for these responsibilities, and to Thomas Heuterman, who will become your president in three days.

I hope that each of you will help Tom and the new officers and directors you will elect to become more efficient and faster, an even greater organization than it now is. Best wishes and Aloha for a successful conference.

American Journalism Book Reviews

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87 CUTLIP, SCOTT M. *Public Relations History: From the 17th to the 20th Century*

88 FACKLER, MARK, AND CHARLES H. LIPPY., eds. *Popular Religious Magazines*

90 FELTON, KEITH SPENCER. *Warrior's Words: A Consideration of Language and Leadership*

91 HARDT, HANNO, AND BONNIE BRENNEN., eds. *Newsworkers: Toward a History of the Rank and File*

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99 RESCH, TYLER., ed. *The Bob Mitchell Years: An Anthology of a Half Century of Editorial Writing by the Publisher of the* Rutland Herald

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102 SAARI, DAVID J. *Too Much liberty?*

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104 SPRAGENS, WILLIAM C. *Electronic Magazines: Soft News Programs on Network Television*

105 SHORT TAKES. *The Culture of Crime...Existential Journalism...Pictures of Our Nobler Selves...Triumph and Erosion in the American Media & Entertainment Industry*

Lloyd Chiasson, ed. ***The Press in Times of Crisis.*** Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1995. 272 pp. Cloth, $59.95. Paper, $18.95.

For an edited collection, *The Press in Times of Crisis* has an unusual level of topical cohesion. Designed to be a useful complement to standard narratives of U.S. journalism history, it features chapters from ten authors on a dozen or so critical periods in U.S. history. To underscore the crisis theme, each chapter opens *in medias res*; to underscore its relevance, each chapter closes with a comment on contemporary parallels. Though the chapters are quite diverse in other ways, two themes consistently emerge: First, the press is both a mirror of its society and, ironically, an agenda setter for public discussion and attitudes. Second, the press has performed pretty sadly when it counted most.

This second point won't come as a surprise to journalism historians. The episodes discussed in this book are familiar to specialists in the field — the Revolution, partisanism, the abolition controversy, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, the Red Scare, World War II, the 1960s, and most recently, racism and environmental issues. In almost every instance, the authors find that the press failed to fully inform the public, and that both the greater society and some of the news media failed to support freedom of expression. The great exception — the one crisis discussed here where a newspaper was a consistent good guy — was in the campaign of the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* against the Louisiana gubernatorial candidacy of David Duke. This chapter was written by Keith Woods, who was the *Times-Picayune's* city editor during the events he discusses, a fact mentioned not in the piece itself but in the appended contributor's bio. And, even while Woods gives his paper credit for defeating Duke (other players are largely absent), he throws in a note of anxiety over the newspaper's violation of its traditional reportorial neutrality.

If the book is dismayed about how the press has actually performed, it is equally assured about how the press *should* have performed. It should have consistently opposed threats to the civil liberties of minorities, as in Joseph McKerns' fine chapter on the Red Scare and Lloyd Chiasson's piece on Japaneseinternment during World War II. The same point emerges in Bernell Tripp's discussion of the abolition controversy. Tripp, however, largely follows Russell Nye's analysis, which yields a smiling history in which the death of Elijah Parish Lovejoy produces a broad northern civil liberties coalition that believes that the freedom of one is the freedom of all, whereas in fact anti-

abolitionist rioting continued when it was politically expedient. (Neither Tripp nor Nye takes notice of the usefulness of anti-abolitionist violence, especially to Jacksonian politicians.)

The book has less to say about how the press normally performs. Donald Avery's strong chapters on the partisan press of the early Republic are an exception, though Avery perhaps goes overboard in seeing similarities between press treatment of Andrew Jackson and Bill Clinton. Carol Sue Humphrey's interesting chapter on Virginia newspapers during the Revolution leaves no doubt that the Revolutionary press was an intimate part of the Revolutionary movement, but depicts this as a departure from normal practice. Likewise, Gene Wiggins "Journey to Cuba" treats the yellow press as an immensely influential aberration that caused war that otherwise wouldn't have taken place. Wiggins is less convincing because he doesn't treat other explanations of the Spanish-American War, which might be better looked upon as a continuation overseas of the U.S. war against the Plains Indians, a point of view that Richard Slotkin suggests in *Gunfighter Nation*. One supposed that it normally performs better.

This inattention to the usual functions of the press, coupled with the volume's multiple authorship, leaves the impression that the normative function of the press has always been the same. In some cases, this leads to extended confusion. Donald Reynolds, for instance, presents a well-documented treatment of both northern and southern press control during the Civil War, but concentrates almost entirely on the press as a conveyor of information about the conflict. He finds northern policy inconsistent, then; but this inconsistency can be cleared up if one factors in politics — the political uses that Lincoln and his generals had for newspapers, and the function of the papers and their editors as political players. Here as elsewhere in the volume the assumption of an unchanging normative function for the press proves anti-historical.

In its treatment of recent history, the book is on surer ground. Art Kaul convincingly depicts the source-dependence of early Vietnam reporting. I found Mike Maher's argument about coverage of the population problem provocative. Using the concepts of framing and agenda setting, Maher argues that the press framed population issues in Malthusian terms in the 1970s — "We're all going to starve" — and then naturally dropped the matter when the population bomb was defused by the green revolution. In his analysis of present-day environmental reporting, Maher finds little mention of the population problem, though he argues that it is in fact the root cause of deforestation and water shortages. I don't know about that. Water and land usage in the United States has increased far faster than population, and we don't ranch cattle in the Amazon to feed the nonbeefeating masses of India. One could argue that the needs of a growth economy are more the cause than population growth, but then structural economic analysis is equally absent from environmental news reporting, perhaps because the class war never came? In any case, the book suggests that the apparatus of professional objective journalism doesn't make the news media less fallible in times of crisis. No pollyannas here.

John Nerone, University of Illinois

Scott M. Cutlip, ***Public Relations History: From the 17th to the 20th Century.*** Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 1995. 284 pp. plus index. Paper, $59.95; cloth, $29.95.

"Systematic efforts to win support for causes, candidates, or corporations is part and parcel of life in a democratic society where public opinion prevails, at least much of the time," asserts Scott M. Cutlip, dean emeritus not only of the University of Georgia College of Journalism and Mass Communication but of public relations education. Neither the argument nor much of the material here — nor the witty asides — are new to generations of public relations educators and practitioners. As one who is both and also is the proud curator of a first edition from more than four decades ago of "the bible of PR," Cutlip and Allen H. Center's *Effective Public Relations*, this reviewer can attest to the inspiration of Cutlip's historical models and his message as imparted in its innumerable editions and interim revisions, most recently with Glen M. Broom as a co-author. Here, Cutlip expands on his now-familiar historical examples.

However, as his previous works also cover the post-1920 period, of work benefits from a focus on the "prehistory" of public relations prior to its rise as a recognizable profession, just as studies of journalism's origins begin with broadsides and other proto-newspapers which evolved for centuries before the term "journalist" came into common parlance. Even early on in either field, converts from journalism abound among historical figures whose careers support Cutlip's thesis that publicity, press agentry, petitioning, lobbying, and other functions of the field "were essential and honorable callings in the beginnings of democracy...and they are essential and honorable callings today" — if taught and learned wisely and well in coursework for which this work is intended.

For teachers and students of mass communication history — not just journalism history — the advantage of this volume is that it is more voluminous and thus better paced than the brief historical overview in the venerable *EPR*. In the case of Amos Kendall, a photojournalist and pioneering political handler who helped make Jacksonian democracy happen, the reader here has three chapters and historical context as compared to a single paragraph on him in the most recent edition of *EPR*. Similarly, the rise of corporate public relations with the rise of big business — and bigger utilities — is explored at greater length, if not in depth. Not examined here is whether American public relations is a function of a capitalistic economy as much as of a democratic society. However, Schudson, Olasky, and others already have offered such critical examination of the field prior to its full emergence in 1920.

If Cutlip's examples do tend to demonstrate an ideal of public relations practice, it is a task of teachers in the history of any profession — as opposed to "pure history" — to provide appropriate role models for aspirants. Cutlip does secondarily demonstrate that when he admits, "not all practitioners work in an honorable manner." This can be said of any profession but is an admirable admission; by comparison, no media history texts dwell on the *National Enquirer* or the Carol Burnett case, but all wax eloquent on the *New York Times*

v. Sullivan ruling. Of course, public relations has had more bad press — literally — than most professions, owing to one of the most enduring public opinion campaigns in history: the anti-PR campaign conducted by journalists and continued by their historians. Thus, teachers and students need only turn to almost any media history text for counterarguments to Cutlip, although they may be hard put to find much countering evidence there.

As a compilation of Cutlip's earlier contributions, including graduate theses which he guided, this work does suffer from the same failings. Most secondary sources are dated. Although more than a dozen works from the last two decades are noted, few are from the last decade, and none are from the field of public relations history which he helped to found.

More of concern is Cutlip's focus on "candidate and corporations" and failure to accord implied equal time to "causes," so students of the nonprofit sector of public relations will be disappointed by a comparative dearth of material on even the first decades of this century. Most disconcerting is the neglect of the nonprofit sector in the nineteenth century, an era characterized by public opinion campaigns which were the most massive in American history as well as among the most costly, even if few practitioners — then called "professional agitators" — were paid. An entire chapter entitled the "greatest public relations work ever done" is given to the campaign for the first ten amendments to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights. But no mention is made of reform campaigns for abolition and woman suffrage which also succeeded in amending the Constitution — and the country.

Ironically, inclusion of minorities' and women's "centuries of struggle" in *Public Relations History: From the 17th to the 20th Century* would best support Cutlip's argument for the significant contribution of public relations in expanding our democratic society beyond the minority of the population and of the public relations profession — white males — who comprise the vast majority in his work. In a field so feminized as to exceed teaching and even nursing in proportion of women practitioners and so in need of minority practitioners, instructors will want to supplement this work with other, more relevant role models. But they will want to include this, the culmination of Cutlip's life's work to make public relations history more accessible — and its omission from mass communication history coursework even more inexcusable.

Genevieve G. McBride, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

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Mark Fackler and Charles H. Lippy, eds. ***Popular Religious Magazines of the United States.*** Westport, Conn: Greenwood, 1995. 605 pp. Cloth, $125.

"With standard directories listing approximately three thousand titles of religious periodicals currently published in the United States, one cannot minimize the importance of the religious press in American culture," the editors

write in their introduction. In this important collective record, the editors have brought together profiles of ninety-six religious publications representing Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish traditions.

The collection focuses on periodicals aimed at a popular, general readership. While most are currently published, a substantial number are no longer in existence and are of primarily historical interest. The book is intended to supplement an earlier work focusing on scholarly religious journals: *Religious Periodicals in the United States: Academic and Scholarly Journals,* (Greenwood, 1986).

While most of the periodicals are — or were — aimed at denominational audiences, others reflect issues, theological perspectives, or social reform endeavors that cut across group boundaries.

Each of the essays is written by a different contributor, most of whom hold academic positions. The four-to-five-page profiles each follow a standard format. Each offers a brief history of the periodical and a description of the its major focus and purpose. Each includes end notes, a bibliography and places where a complete collection is available either in print or microform. End matter summarizes any title changes that have transpired, publishers and places of publication, a listing of editors, and circulation figures.

The authors admit that the collection offers only a "representative sampling" of more than ten thousand titles that were candidates for inclusion. While the collection includes publications representing Christian and Jewish religious traditions, that representation is somewhat uneven. No currently published periodicals in the Anglican or Episcopal tradition are included, and there is only one each representing the many Quaker, and predominantly African-American, or Pentecostal and charismatic churches. Other notable absences include such major Roman Catholic periodicals as *National Catholic Reporter* and *St. Anthony's Messenger.* The authors admit, however, that titles they had hoped to include were abandoned because of obscure location sources or the inability of contributors to find complete publication runs. At the same time, one is puzzled why several publications serving denominations in a single state or limited geographical area were included.

This criticism, however, is not intended to diminish the writer's assessment of the significant scope and importance of this book. It should be on the shelf of every university library and in the hands of anyone with more than a casual interest in the religious press. In recent years, both print and electronic media have recognized the significant role of religion in American life and taken major steps to improve their coverage. Systematic and scholarly study of the religious press, however, is still perhaps the most neglected area of journalism scholarship. This book is a major step forward and should be the starting point for any scholar who wishes to examine the significant influence of America's religious periodicals in our nation's history.

David E. Sumner, Ball State University

Keith Spencer Felton, ***Warriors' Words: A Consideration of Language and Leadership.*** Westport, Conn.: Praeger Press, 1995. 196 pp. Cloth, $55.

The premise of Felton's work is to examine "how an elevated use of language can magnify meaning, and motivate beyond the facile measure. It is about the persuasive import of oratory ...." Felton believes that in order to understand world history one can look deeply at the words uttered by leaders, either during times of crisis or at personal junctures that represent a lifetime of public oratory, and then determine how the flow of events was altered by their eloquence. In pursuit of this theme, Felton has selected fifteen individuals who have used the power of their talk to affect history and who did so with language that is as much poetic as practical.

Among the most obvious of his selections stand Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, John Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr. The power of oratory, however, is not always harnessed for public good, and to Felton's credit he scrutinizes the words of Adolph Hitler and Joseph McCarthy just as readily as he reviews the gentle musings of Adlai Stevenson and the righteous calls of Jesse Jackson. Ironically, though, Felton also includes in his collection several people of actions rather than words, the social reformers Jane Adams and the little known Alice Hamilton, the Mahatma Ghandi, and Clarence Darrow. Felton has also chosen to highlight the eloquence (or lack thereof) of such important, but less seminal figures as Dwight Eisenhower and Neville Chamberlain. The odd selection of people to examine, however, may be the key to Felton's moderate success in achieving his critical goal.

If Felton were to attempt to simply highlight for the reader the memorable phrases of oratorical history, his book might have been a useful volume for historians or rhetorical critics. He attempts, however, to engage the rhetoric of his subjects at several levels: the personal influences which guide the speakers, the historical flow of events which give rise to the rhetorical situations, the textual examination of the speeches (or in many cases, their writings), and the consequences of the rhetorical interventions. Such a broad sweep of history and orators simply cannot be achieved in one small volume. The results of Felton's overwritten criticism are historical overviews only pages long, just paragraphs of situational set up and rare mention of the strategic language choices or oral style which would elevate speeches to literature and speakers to historical figures.

The selections of text included in the volume are often worthy, (FDR's War), occasionally unexpected delights (the summation by Darrow at the Leopold and Loeb trial), but also bewildering choices for a book on eloquence (the War Resolution of Congress in 1941). Just as surprising, several people have only a paragraph or two of their words included and then in the form of letters they had written (Ghandi and Stevenson). In no case is a close reading of any text conducted.

There is no comprehensive conclusion made about the nature of language except that "leadership is defined by the same terms as rhetoric: moving people to action, by moving their feelings with stirring verbal tools." But what

of eloquence? Though Felton argues that memorable phrasing is crucial to effectiveness and historical longevity, in practice eloquence appears to be a byproduct of speaking rather than the central reason for its success.

Kevin 0. Sauter, University of St. Thomas

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Hanno Hardt and Bonnie Brennen, eds., ***Newsworkers: Toward a History of the Rank and File.*** Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995. 237 pp. Cloth, $49.95; Paper, $19.95.

Almost fifty years ago, George Seldes penned a bitter truth about some newsworkers:

> The reporter throughout our history has been the lowliest of animals. Believing himself to be too good to join in any organization or movement, he has found himself exploited by everyone, and he has been so blinded by his egotism that he has refused to look out for his own material interests.

In our time of seemingly weekly megamergers — accompanied by layoffs, buyouts, frozen wages, broken unions, and the shutdown of daily after daily — Seldes' words ring with even more bitterness, with even more truth. Still, the labor and organizational history of these lowly animals — and their newsworking colleagues — is one that mostly goes untold.

Newsworkers attempts to fill in at least part of the history. Edited by Hanno Hardt, professor of journalism and mass communication at the University of Iowa, and Bonnie Brennen, assistant professor of communication at SUNY-Geneseo, the book is a series of eight original essays.

The essays are tied together theoretically. Each shares a grounding in critical theory and cultural studies. Each "addresses the historical place of newsworkers and the role of labor in the rise of media capitalism." Each attempts to provide alternatives to mainstream histories that have privileged great men, great technology, and great democratic, capitalist ideas.

The essays are also tied by time. The period addressed falls primarily between 1890 and 1940, an era when political, economic, social, and technological factors joined to produce the mass press, the commodification of news, and long-standing divisions of editorial practices and newsroom labor.

Hardt and Brennen have called upon a strong and varied group of writers to recover intriguing parts of this history. Their works are rich, detailed, and creative as they explore the promise and potential of newsworkers' histories.

Hardt offers the introductory essay that places the often sorry state of media history in the context of intellectual developments in American historiography.

Elizabeth Lester studies the ideological strategies — and the lack of newsworkers — in journalism history textbooks. Marianne Salcetti suggests that the "mechanization" of newsroom labor led directly to low pay and little job security for journalists.

Bonnie Brennen draws upon an interesting source — novels about American journalists — for her insights into material conditions in the newsroom. William Solomon traces the development of the editorial hierarchy, a division of labor that aids the exploitation and manipulation of individual workers within the hierarchy.

Barbie Zelizer looks at journalists' responses in the 1930s and 1940s to the increasing use of photographs in the news. David Spencer studies dissident journalists in Canada. And finally, Jon Bekken pursues another group of celebrated newsworkers — newsboys, a term that refers to boys and girls — and their peculiar, essential role in distribution.

One flaw is readily apparent in the conception of the project. Though a chapter is devoted to newsboys, *Newsworkers* is really about reporters and editors. Other newsworkers — typesetters, printers, clerks, librarians, drivers — are not represented here. Surely an essay might have been assigned to address even preliminarily the omission.

For example, an essay could probe the fascinating history of typesetters, whose jobs were eclipsed by technology seemingly overnight and whose unions fought passionately to protect and preserve their positions.

Newspaper truck drivers also have a passionate and provocative story that confronts media technology, the explosion of the suburbs, and the declining numbers of afternoon papers.

The numerous ideas that spring forth, however, only prove the point of *Newsworkers*: Histories of the rank and file are sorely lacking. Even reporters, the heart of the newspaper and the lowliest of animals, have mostly been ignored. Until now.

Jack Lule, Lehigh University

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Marilyn J. Matelski, ***Vatican Radio: Propagation by the Airwaves.*** Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 1995. 224 pp. Cloth, $55.

Religion is one of the most critical components in understanding culture, and this is the second of the Praeger Media and Society series edited by J. Fred MacDonald to effectively analyze how religion, media, and culture intersect.

Vatican Radio (station HVJ) has been broadcasting a mix of entertainment, news, and religious programming from studios just outside the Vatican over short wave, AM and FM, for sixty-five years. The early use of radio to propagate the faith was in part the brainchild of then Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, later Pope Pius XII. In 1930, he negotiated

with Guglielmo Marconi on behalf of the Holy See for the construction of a shortwave radio system and internal Vatican telephone system.

Vatican Radio was initially put in the hands of the Society of Jesus — the Jesuits — who run it to this date. In her comprehensive look at the history and structure of Vatican radio, Marilyn Matelski, a professor of communications at Boston College, comments a great deal on its inner workings. Through the years Radio Vaticana, as it is known in Rome, has broadcast Catholic doctrine and not a few political messages. By 1937 it was broadcasting in ten languages as far away as Japan and South America. In 1938, with World War II in the offing, Pope Pius XI created the Catholic Information Service, also run by members of the Society of Jesus, to counter the propaganda of atheism from Axis powers. Throughout the war, Vatican Radio maintained the diplomatic neutrality required of the Vatican by the 1927 Lateran Treaty, signed by Benito Mussolini and Secretary of State Pacelli, which agreed that Vatican City State was to be free of aggression even in time of war. Nevertheless, from 1940 to 1946 Vatican Radio's "Information Office" transmitted more than one million messages to assist in the finding of prisoners of war and other missing persons. In 1940, Vatican Radio was the first to broadcast stories of the horrors of the Nazi death camps, stories it continued to feature.

By 1949 HVJ had returned to its prewar programming, broadcasting in nineteen languages world wide. In the 1950s, anti-Communist intent and programming took the Catholic world's imagination, and $2.5 million in donations caused the promise of twenty-four-hour broadcasting in twenty-eight languages, eventually from two 10 kW shortwave transmitters, one 250 kW medium wave transmitter, one 328-foot multidirectional antenna for medium wave broadcast to Europe and twenty-one additional antennae in 1957, all complemented five years later by a 100 kW transmitter for broadcast to Asia, Australia, and New Zealand. Facilities continued to improve during postwar years, and a drive through the hills outside Rome today will present ample proof of the intense broadcasting power of the Holy See. By the mid-1970s, Vatican Radio had a 500 kW transmitter at Santa Maria di Galeria.

Controversies within the Vatican over the use of radio are not unusual in retrospect. There was great consternation at first when Papal speeches did not match the officially-released transcript. How closely the radio station adhered to the dictates of a particular Pontificate depended in large part on the particular Pontiff. Matelski reports that the current Pope, John Paul II, has considered replacing Jesuit management with members of Opus Dei, a church-affiliated organization (now a "personal prelature" — a diocese without walls) sternly loyal to the strictest interpretation of Church doctrine.

This volume is difficult to follow when it moves away from straight journalism history to considerations of ecclesiology, Papal policy, and an uncritical use of secondary sources. Matelski's task was undoubtedly made more difficult by the apparent refusal of Vatican Radio's director to make historical documents available for her scrutiny. He wrote that documents are kept in the administrative archives of Vatican City, and of the Secretariat of State, neither of which is open to the public. In fact, researchers are often stymied by the

Vatican's policy of not opening documents by Pontificate until about one hundred years after the fact.

Vatican Radio is the first world wide radio system. Its unique history predicts similar attempts at world wide transmission, as well as similar attempts at cultural influence by later religious broadcasters. Where this book presents facts on the history of HJV, it serves journalism historians well.

Phyllis Zagano, Boston University

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John F. Neville. ***The Press, the Rosenbergs, and the Cold War.*** Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1995. 207 pp. Cloth, $55.

There is much to admire in Neville's work. The author has carefully reviewed the trial transcript, interviewed many of those still alive to tell their story, and examined press coverage of the storied 1951 case. He concludes that the daily press and widely circulated news magazines were a captive of Cold War passions in reporting the case, and mirrored government and public hostility toward the Rosenbergs.

While Neville's findings are hardly unexpected, they are nevertheless intriguing given the efforts of the Rosenbergs and prosecutors to frame the conventional wisdom that guided public perception of the case. Neville concludes that claims the Rosenbergs were Communist spies who passed secrets about the A-bomb to Soviet intelligence officers played well to Cold War paranoia that had been heightened by the startup of the Korean conflict. Neville's view is that this inhibited the effort of Rosenberg sympathizers to point up weaknesses in the trial that sentenced the Rosenbergs to death. Nearly half the book deals with the dizzying effort of the Left Wing press over two years to reverse the middle class certainty that the Rosenbergs were dangerous spies worthy of death.

Even though the reader knows attempts to spare the Rosenbergs will fail, Neville's narrative is still evocative. His terse summary of the Sing Sing executions is particularly compelling and helps us forgive earlier imagery of the case sweeping France "like a Kansas prairie fire."

The book's strength is its reconstruction through oral history interviews of the offensive waged by the *National Guardian,* a Left Wing, New York based newspaper, to force a reconsideration of the Rosenberg case by the mainstream press. Neville notes that the tendency of the Cold War press to privilege legitimized authority led them to disregard good detective work done by journalists on the Left. This finding is consistent with agenda-setting research Neville cites throughout his text.

Neville's book would benefit from a thorough editing. It would greatly strengthen a fragmentary preface and microscopic introductory chapters that fail to establish what the book is precisely about. It isn't until chapter three that Neville asserts the "great pressure" the news media faced to affirm their patriotism in covering the Rosenberg case, but the book does little to develop

that argument. Neville claims that even if the Rosenbergs gave the Soviets atomic secrets it did not advance the Soviet atomic program "even marginally" (ix). But he makes no reference to Nikita Khruschev's memoirs which state that Joseph Stalin and Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov thought the opposite. An editor might also strengthen the organization of Neville's paragraphs (see, for instance, p. 79) and clean up the book's annoying typos (pp. 5, 14, 38, 71, 112, 132, 137, and 157).

Neville makes much of the effort to commute the Rosenberg death sentences and this discussion would benefit by reviewing the papers of Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower, two presidents who stood between the convicted couple and the electric chair. Neville simply asserts that the daily press was captured by the Cold War and McCarthyism in telling the story of the Rosenbergs. But the author needs to deal with the postwar writings and interviews of Arthur Krock, Lester Markel, C. L. Sulzberger, Jack Bell, Raymond Brandt, Gould Lincoln, Robert Riggs, Carleton Kent, and others who insisted the kept press of World War II would not continue to be kept in a post war world. This context would strengthen the book's fundamental tension — that reporters who saw a world threatened by international communism saw little reason to save a couple convicted of passing secrets that moved the world closer to its Armageddon.

Bruce J. Evensen, DePaul University

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Elizabeth Partridge, ed., ***Dorothea Lange: A Visual Life.*** Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994. 168 pp. Cloth, $55. Paper, $24.95.

Dorothea Lange is known principally as one of the photographers who documented rural poverty in the South during the Great Depression for Roy Stryker and the Farm Security Administration. Her photo, "Migrant Mother," taken along a California roadside, is one of the signature images of the FSA collection.

This book, however, gives Dorothea Lange a different identity. She is enlarged for the reader in the roles of family matriarch, mentor, mother, pioneering woman artist/photographer, physically disabled person, and professional collaborator. The book's editor, Elizabeth Partridge, presents Lange from a distinctly unique vantage. Her father was Rondal Partridge, protegé of Lange's and son of photographer Imogen Cunningham, also Lange's close friend. Elizabeth Partridge was a part of Lange's extended family and an observer and participant in her family rituals and holidays on the California coast. Lange died in 1965 of throat cancer when Partridge was fourteen; Lange was seventy.

Partridge writes that the book is "on Dorothea's photography," but it is more a seeking out of information about an individual who was dominant and yet mysterious in the life of a young girl. This book is more Partridge's search to know Lange thirty years after her death.

As such, *A Visual Life* is rich in diverse perspectives on Lange. Partridge has gathered seven essays — including her own introduction and a piece by Lange's son Daniel Dixon — a collection of about one hundred photos, of which nearly eighty are by Lange, and an interview with Ansel Adams, with whom Lange worked occasionally. These essays and images, instead of focusing on Lange's aesthetic, give insight into the marrow of the individual and thus why she photographed what and how she did.

One of the most fascinating essays is Sally Stein's "Peculiar Grace: Dorothea Lange and the Testimony of the Body." Stein is an art historian at the University of California, Irvine, and in her extensive piece she conducts a sensitive discussion and analysis of how Lange's physical disability framed her own visual reaction to the world. Stein reports that Lange limped for most of her life as a consequence of a childhood bout with infantile paralysis; her right leg was shorter and less developed, and the foot was relatively inflexible. Although friends and associates disagreed about the importance of this lameness on Lange's work, Stein believes it was significantly formative. She quotes Lange on the subject:

> I was physically disabled, and no one who hasn't lived the life of a semi-cripple knows how much that means. I think it perhaps was the most important thing that happened to me, and formed me, guided me, instructed me, helped me, and humiliated me.

The other essays discuss Lange in terms of her life as a professional career woman during a time when few women followed that path; her relationship with her second husband, Paul Taylor, the labor economist; her work with the War Relocation Authority, photographing Japanese Americans confined in "relocation camps" during World War II; and through the eyes of her son Daniel Dixon, from her first marriage with the artist Maynard Dixon.

One chapter presents a collection of Lange photographs that show a range of work over time and subject matter — from early shots to her photographs of Hopis and Navahos in the 1920s, migrant workers in California in the 1930s, Japanese Americans at Manzanar Relocation Center, Mormons in Utah in the 1950s, Ireland in the 1950s, the Middle East in the 1960s and, finally, home and family in the 1950s and 1960s. The reproduction of the images and the layout of the pages are excellent; the book's heavy, smooth-finished paper gives a fine sharpness to the images as well as strength to the tones; all photos are black and white.

Various quotes from Lange are matched with the photos. Some critics might quibble about this technique. Words can very effectively shape the meaning of the images they accompany; thus, these pictures can be made to "say" something Lange had not intended. However, the point here is Partridge's

search for understanding about Lange, and in her linking certain words with certain images, she is offering her own interpretation and recovery of a life which had a major impact on her own.

Patsy Watkins, University of Arkansas

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Henry J. Perkinson, ***How Things Got Better: Speech, Writing, Printing, and Cultural Change.*** Westport, Conn., and London: Bergin and Garvey, 1995. 172 pp. Cloth, $49.95.

Reading *How Things Got Better* is a Herbert Spencer-meets-Harold Adam Innis experience. The book advocates a "cultural Darwinism," reminiscent of Spencer's Social Darwinism, applied to a global history of human communication, reminiscent of Innis's great works. Unfortunately, Perkinson's cultural theory seems no more likely to survive "critical selection" (which he says replaces "natural selection" in the cultural realm) than did Spencer's. And his communication history, filled with sweeping generalizations, secondary sources, and ideologically selected evidence, adds little to the historical landscape already surveyed by Innis.

Parkinson argues that each new medium of communication, from speech to print (and presumably beyond), added a new and improved dimension to human existence. Each new medium caused a progressive, evolutionary improvement in human culture. For example, he claims, "Speech made man human; writing civilized him." And print, he implies, caused almost everything else good in Western civilization.

The author's technological determinism reduces complex social and cultural phenomena to one-dimensional caricatures. Important contextual factors and historical interrelationships are consistently absent from the author's analysis. Debatable factual claims, if not outright errors, abound.

These weaknesses only magnify the underlying troubles with the book's central thesis. Cultural Darwinism (as an ideological or quasi-religious doctrine) may explain the "natural" rise of various cultural artifacts, like the printing press, although I doubt it. Still, it does not begin to explain the source of human value judgments or what constitutes "better" or "worse." The author offers no argument or historical evidence for a theory of evaluation that could justify his claims that "things got better." He simply declares it so. Darwinism and its positivist progeny have always claimed to be descriptive theory, even though their true believers act as if they were normative and prescriptive.

In the end, Parkinson wants "what is" to be "what should be." However, the gulf between "is" and "ought" is far too wide and deep for Perkinson's cultural Darwinism to bridge. "How Things Got Better" is just another victim of critical selection.

Roy Alden Atwood, University of Idaho

Paul Alfred Pratte, ***Gods Within the Machine: A History of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1923-1993.*** Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 1995. 248 pp. Cloth, $55.

Conceived in the shadow of Teapot Dome, the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) is an organization running away from its past. Its defining moment occurred at its inception, when it failed to censure *Denver Post* publisher-editor Frederick G. Bonfils for his implication in the infamous Harding administration scandal. For journalists to look the other way when one of their own dirties his hands is wrong; for a professional organization boasting a code of ethics to look away is tragic. Despite shouts of "Out, damned spot!", the stain of the Bonfils affair still haunts ASNE.

Such is among the conclusions one reaches after reading Professor Alf Pratte's workmanlike history of ASNE. Also, one concludes that, with few exceptions, the leadership of ASNE has been uninspired, narrow-minded, and timid; that while the leadership of Norman Isaacs, Herbert Brucker, Russell Wiggins, Loren Ghiglione, and a few others, gave ASNE its finest moments, their accomplishments were often undone, or set aside to wither, by their successors; and that ASNE's stance on ethics is mere platitudes unsupported by meaningful action.

Despite the best intentions of Pratte, who paints a generally sympathetic and laudatory portrait of ASNE, the book often is an indictment of ASNE in its own words. Pratte, himself, chides the association for its inability to deal forthrightly with key issues such as ethics, chain ownership, and the changing role of newspapers in modern society.

The book is problematic from the point of view of historical scholarship. Pratte's method of organization and his overall approach to the subject are the bane and boon of the work. In essence, *Gods Within the Machine* is more "chronicle" than "history." The author had full access to ASNE files, and much of what is included appears for the first time. No previous work on ASNE has treated the subject with the breadth Pratte does. Every annual convention is discussed, and every significant issue raised in the minutes is brought to light. This provides historians with a valuable chronicle of an important professional association. However, the book's exhaustive, and exhausting, trip through the minutiae of organizational detail is its downfall as history.

Pratte unwisely allows the order of the agenda at the annual meetings to dictate how his history unfolds. Each chapter covers a decade, and within each chapter, the discussion moves from the first convention of the decade to the last. Many of the chapters seemed unfocused and lack a theme. Too often, issues and topics are raised, touched briefly, and dropped without comment, elaboration, or evaluation as the next agenda item is taken up. This may reflect the collective state of mind of an association that was unfocused and diffuse regarding issues facing it. When the story covers a period where issues were better focused, and the group's discussion more substantive, e.g., during the 1960s, or under the leadership of Isaacs, Wiggins, and other strong figures, the chapters are more vibrant and thought-provoking.

Pratte describes what was on the collective mind of ASNE, but not why it was. He summarizes the convention debates, speeches, and statements and policies of ASNE, but without exploring why an issue was raised, or why the association acted one way or the other. Criticism of ASNE by its own members, and others, is also described, but no evaluation of the criticism's validity or significance is offered. There are a few perfunctory attempts at elaboration, e.g., to point out a pattern of inaction on a recurring issue.

Furthermore, Pratte's treatment of ASNE seems to float in an historical vacuum. Brief discussions of the Great Depression, the New Deal, World War II, the Cold War, McCarthyism, and the Vietnam era introduce chapters in an attempt to set context, but are little more than markers noting the passage of time. Little of substance is said about the society outside of the meeting rooms of ASNE conventions. For example, in discussing ASNE's response to McCarthyism, no mention of Edward R. Murrow, "See It Now," or CBS is made.

Pratte's treatment of ASNE as a universe adrift of historical context, prevents him from meaningfully assessing ASNE's significance as a major organization representing an important cultural and political institution. But chronicle has its place in historical scholarship, and it is in that category that this volume fits.

Joseph P. McKerns, Ohio State University

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Tyler Resch, ed., ***The Bob Mitchell Years: An Anthology of a Half Century of Editorial Writing by the Publisher of the* Rutland Herald.** Rutland, Vt.: The Rutland Herald, 1994. 533 pp. Paper, $24.

If you want to know what a Vermont publisher and editorial writer said about Vermont public affairs from the 1940s to the 1990s, this book is for you. The title tells pretty clearly what the collection is all about. Robert Mitchell wrote columns or editorials for the *Rutland Herald* from 1942 — and served as publisher and co-owner beginning in 1947 — until a few months before his death in early 1993.

This anthology reprints many of his published opinions. They cover the wide range of topics that a local editorial writer would be expected to express a view on — politics in Vermont, race relations in Vermont, industrial development in Vermont, and other local issues of the day, with occasional attention to such national matters as the Watergate political scandal that brought down the Nixon presidency.

Don't look for poetry in the pieces. American editorial writing has produced many lyrical writers — Ben Hur Lampman, Edward Kingsbury, Francis Church, Arthur Brisbane, William Allen White, and Henry Watterson, to name some of the best. Mitchell was not one of them. He did write, however, with a consistent clearness, employing with mastery that mechanical style known as

"plain English." If you are looking for a book that approaches editorial writing as an art, look elsewhere. This book was published not to celebrate a great editorial writer, but to commemorate a long Rutland career.

If you are not particularly interested in the content of the three hundred or so opinion pieces reprinted here, you might find editor Tyler Resch's introductory biographical material to your reading tastes. Resch grew up in Vermont journalism — although he admits that "As for Bob Mitchell, I knew him but slightly" — and provides a straightforward biography of about fifty pages. He also offers an introduction of several pages for each of the nine sections into which the editorials are divided.

Although the texts of Mitchell's writing may not provoke widespread readership, media historians should find some interest in his editorial views published in the section "Newspapers and Press Freedom." They are typical rather than exceptional, and they offer insight into the thinking of one local publisher over five decades on such matters as chain ownership, prior restraint, newspaper design, and access to information. They provide the stuff of historical research. Thus, the book can serve as a useful resource for the historian examining public utterances about journalism by a journalist. And on rare occasions the historian will run across some wit and even tenderness. Mitchell's advice to the man who habitually read the daily occurrences at the breakfast table and ignored his family: "Never under any circumstances should the morning newspaper be used as an excuse for omission of such amenities as the morning kiss, a cheery good morning, or a tender smile." That could be good advice universally, not just in Vermont.

If this anthology included more of such writing, it might find an interested readership outside Vermont. As it is, it will find most of its appeal among Mitchell's friends in Rutland.

W. David Sloan, University of Alabama

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Naomi Rosenblum, ***A History of Women Photographers.*** New York: Abbeville Press, 1994. 356 pp. Cloth, $60.

Few scholars will be surprised by Rosenblum's introduction, where she ticks off just how infrequently women photographers have been included in the historical accounts of the profession, but this recounting does remind us why her ambitious undertaking was so necessary and overdue. Somebody had to do it, and few other photo historians have a work as enormous — and successful — as *A World History of Photography* (1984) to their credit, making Rosenblum eminently qualified.

The contributions of approximately 240 women from the Americas and Europe are included in her survey, which ranges throughout the more than 150-year history of the medium. The danger inherent in such a large project is who to

include and who to exclude; Rosenblum's methodology is included in the introduction but few will be satisfied with her all-too brief explanation.

Rosenblum says her survey shows that "photography has played a role in determining how various aesthetic, political and social issues have been perceived within a culture, and among these issues has been the changing role of women." While the greatest attention is given to women working in the fine arts, mass communication scholars will be especially interested in Rosenblum's Chapter 6, "Photography Between the Wars: North America, 1920-40" and Chapter 7, "Photography as Information, 1940-90." Readers, however, must keep in mind the vastness of her survey, or else become frustrated with the lack of depth even in these important chapters.

Critical to future researchers is the selected bibliography by Peter M. Palmquist and the thumbnail biographies by Jain Kelly; unfortunately, they both include only the photographers whose work is illustrated in Rosenblum's text rather than everyone about whom she writes.

And Rosenblum's choice of images and illustrations, which number more than two hundred and sixty, is curious. Rather than select a typical image by a particular photographer, Rosenblum tends toward the esoteric. While this approach expands the readers' horizons, there is something disappointing about her failure to include more of the classic images by these photographers. If given her rationale, we might be more understanding of her selections.

The book's nine chapters document women's contributions to the development of photography, especially the ways in which women's creativity often enabled them to carve out a lucrative profession while engaging in self-expression. "The Feminist Vision," the final chapter, is rather middle-of-the-road interpretation of the influence of the women's movement, sure to disappoint some feminists.

In spite of these criticisms, Rosenblum is to be commended for tackling such a monumental project. This book, which should become part of every institution's library, should inspire further study and is most useful to mass communication scholars when used along with sections of other major references like Constance Sullivan's *Women Photographers* (1990), C. Jane Gover's *The Positive Image: Women Photographers in Turn of the Century America* (1988), Val Williams' *Women Photographers: The Other Observers, 1900 to the Present* (1986), Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe's *Viewfinders: Black Women Photographers* (1986), Margery Mann and Anne Noggle's *Women of Photography: An Historical Survey* (1975), and Ann Tucker's *The Woman's Eye* (1973).

C. Zoe Smith, University of Missouri-Columbia

David J. Saari, ***Too Much Liberty? Perspectives on Freedom and the American Dream.*** Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1995. 192 pp. Cloth, $55, Paper $15.95.

Freedom in the United States is under siege on two fronts, according to David Saari, professor of public affairs at American University. One is the federal government, which has been steadily gaining power at the expense of effective decentralization and strong states. The other is the multinational corporation, which, under the guise of free market economics, has gained control of local political and social agendas and has attempted thought control through advertising and ownership of the mass media. The result is nothing less than the loss of political, economic, and social self-determination by the people of America.

This assault on democracy by the federal government and the multinational corporation has given rise to profound unease and restlessness, but the resulting debates have been counterproductive. On one side are those who argue that liberty gave way to license in the 1960s, so that people need to act more responsibly, even if that responsibility has to be enforced by the government. On the other side are those who react to the erosion of their autonomy by embracing libertarianism, a stance that unwittingly gives permission for corporate domineering. Because these perspectives are based on hazy notions of freedom, public discourse about freedom has become more incoherent as the need to reinforce freedom has become more urgent.

Public discourse about freedom will improve, Saari says, only if people can agree on what exactly freedom means, so he offers a three-part "architecture of freedom." There is freedom of the state, the right of a people to live according to laws of their own choosing, free from external domination. There is freedom within a state, the right to participate in the expanse of political life without coercion. And there is freedom from a state, the right of individuals to self-realization, expression, and association.

Freedom from slavery and torture are the only trumps in this world of freedom. Freedom is not absolute: It is contingent, limited, always dependent upon competing claims of equality, authority, order, property, justice, and privacy. Saari applies the architecture of freedom and these six contingent values to advocate the splintering of multinational corporations, which he calls modern-day surrogates of the state. A corporation is not a person, so it has no claim to freedom. More importantly, it has no right to usurp national freedom, civic freedom, or inner freedom. Indeed to ensure these three freedoms, Saari advocates breaking up firms that control more than ten percent of market share in any industry and actively guarding against foreign competition.

Although *Too Much Liberty?* is a systematic analysis of a bedrock element of democracy, it is repetitious, abstract, and historically threadbare. It discusses more authors than controversies, raising the issue of definition but by no means resolving it. This is a shame, because if Saari is correct about the

government being out front and the multinationals in the back, then we need a book that is both passionate and convincing, qualities that *Too Much Liberty?* sorely lacks.

John P. Ferré, University of Louisville

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Peggy and Harold Samuels, ***Remembering the Maine.*** Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995. 358 pp. Cloth, $29.95.

Headlines and fanciful front-page illustrations on 17 February 1898, in Hearst's *Journal* and Pulitzer's *World* exploited the explosion of the battleship *Maine* in Havana harbor and proclaimed that the explosion was no accident. Journalism history books treat the explosion as one of several events the newspapers exploited to boost circulation and to incite war fever against Spain.

Peggy and Harold Samuels, who have written extensively about Frederic Remington and other artists of the West, explore the political intrigues and investigations surrounding the *Maine's* explosion. Over the years, many theories have been advanced about the causes of the explosion that killed 267 American sailors: "The Spanish government blew up the *Maine,* or ultra-Spanish military fanatics did, or the Cuban insurgents, or minions of publisher William Randolph Hearst, or the disaster was an accident." (3).

The explosion was among several events newspapers exploited to stimulate war and feed conspiracy theories. "By devoting eight-and-a-half pages an issue to these 'provocations,' the circulation of the *New York Journal* rose from 416,885 on 9 February to 1,025,624 eight days later," the Samuels wrote. "Headlines such as 'The *Maine* Was Destroyed by Treachery' and 'The Whole Country Thrills with War Fever, Yet the President Says It Was an Accident' were in heavy black inch-high type running the width of the front page." (144) Foreign editors marveled, not at American war fever, but at the people's ability to resist it for so long. President McKinley, however, had to resist long enough to prepare for war.

The Samuels return to each investigation of the *Maine,* including one before and one after the Spanish-American War. And they explore the political motivation, the public relations considerations, and ego involvement of participants in each study from 1898 to 1976.

Contemporary politics usually colored how Americans wanted to perceive the explosion. The Samuels explore, affirm, and refute parts of each of the theories. And they side with the original investigators who concluded that the ship was destroyed by a mine beneath it. But their position is subtle and often makes the reader guess at their own views of the explosion.

The Samuels thoroughly document the motivation of investigators through private letters and public statements, but the Samuels rely primarily on the first investigators for technical expertise. Regardless of culpability for the explosion, moving the ship into Havana harbor was a provocative act, and the

captain and crew actually expressed surprise that nothing happened before the explosion.

The Samuels comment on news coverage, drawing conclusions about "most newspapers" and "most correspondents" without demonstrating a methodology to show that they've studied most newspapers or correspondents. They mention specific egregious examples of fabricated or exaggerated stories, and they use newspapers as sources of what key players told the press in different circumstances. Political intrigues by reporters, in getting news from Cuba and Washington and in smuggling news passed censors, became part of the story. Analysis of news coverage cannot be found in a specific place in the book noreasily found in the index. Instead, it can be found throughout the Samuels' entertaining overview of this intriguing chapter of U. S . history.

William E. Huntzicker, University of Minnesota

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William C. Spragens, ***Electronic Magazines: Soft News Programs on Network Television.*** Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1995. 168 pp. Cloth, $49.95.

A journalism historian looking for a summary programming guide to "60 Minutes" might find this slim tome useful. In its first chapter, it does in fact contain a brief history of electronic magazines, "feature and personality-based television segment(s) more oriented to the superficial or short-term viewer than one heavy on analysis and abstract concepts" (2). The book's author claims to have produced a content analysis of this type of programming. This claim is not supported by the resulting work.

Spragens states his thesis is that electronic magazines have "at least the potential for serving the public with balanced assessment of information as well as full facts" (9). However, such a thesis can neither be proven nor disproved. As a result, the book is, in essence, paragraph after paragraph of programming content summaries lacking perspective or analysis.

More specifically, it is overwhelmingly a summary of segments in various "60 Minutes" and other CBS programs, without any interviews or other primary source material. Scarce lip service is paid to television's other electronic magazines. Chapters 2-4 deal with "60 Minutes," while chapters 5-7 treat "48 Hours," "Street Stories," and "West 57th," respectively. Only one chapter addresses electronic magazines on ABC and NBC, "historically late-comers to magazine programming" (91). CNN and Fox networks are mentioned in passing.

Critique and analysis are all but nonexistent. The author's opinions are tepid. For instance, Spragens writes, "It is not really possible to draw conclusions, but one would hope that professional information gatherers would secure the kind of briefing that would make these segments more informative" (34). Here are some other examples: "This informative sequence gave much useful background information..." (50). "This informative segment sought to

present both the accuser and accused's stories; thus the CBS guidelines for fairness in presentation were followed" (50). "This segment gave opportunities to be heard to both sides of a controversial subject. It was tightly edited, in general well presented."

Even when presented with the opportunity to offer some valuable insight based upon a true content analysis of electronic magazines, the author hedges: "ABC's magazine programming tends to deal with a conservative ... agenda in contrast to CBS, which tends to have a liberal ... agenda.... Here we speak only of tendencies" (93). At other times, either the author's logic seems flawed or his historical perspective lacking: "The most consistent network insofar as regular carrying of the programming was ABC, a pattern which may reflect the journalistic background of the owners of Capital Cities Broadcasting, long in the radio business..." (102). Has the author forgotten that the journalistic reputation of CBS in radio is at least as impressive?

Maintaining that it is the duty of those engaged in serious academic study "to make an effort at prediction," the author concludes that "one may expect either a continuation of the trends discussed here or, given new environmental factors, a reversal of these trends" (119). That statement leads this reviewer to question the publication of this book by Praeger.

Gregory C. Lisby, Georgia State University

SHORT TAKES

William J. Gonzenbach, ***The Media, the President, and Public Opinion: A Longitudinal Analysis of the Drug Issue, 1984-1991.*** Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1996. 117 pp. Paper, $20.

Gonzenbach relies on and builds on agenda setting research and methodology "to determine how drug-related issues and events, both real and fabricated, and the primary agendas drove the (drug) issue over time." He looks at how the media "structure interpretations of drug issues and events, how the president framed the issues and events, how the agendas of the media, the president and the public interacted and affected public policy, and differences between Reagan and Bush presidencies. In the process, Gonzenbach documents the cyclical nature of the drug issue as a public problem. Perhaps because it employs different methodology and is grounded in different epistemology, Gonzenbach neither acknowledges nor mentions in his "References" list the 1994 Campbell-Reeves study of the same topic *Cracked Coverage: Television News, the Anti-Cocaine Crusade, and the Reagan Legacy* (Duke University Press).

Craig L. LaMay and Everette E. Dennis, eds., ***The Culture of Crime.*** New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1995. Originally published in the *Media Studies Journal*, Winter, 1992. 196 pp. Paper, $18.95.

The editors try to shed some light on "the most common and least studied staple of news" by providing nineteen commentaries and research essays dealing with crime and the media. Journalism historians who missed this material when it first appeared in the *Media Studies Journal* in 1992 will find several selections of particular interest, including American Studies scholar Elliott Gorn's look at the *National Police Gazette* in the 1870s and 1880s, and historian Richard Maxwell Brown's "Desperadoes and Lawmen: The Folk Hero." In a critique of insipid crime reporting, "The Reporter I: Cops, Killers and Crispy Critters," David Simon, *Baltimore Sun* police reporter and author of *Homicide: A Year on the Killing Streets*, calls for more "narrative journalism" (what some would call literary journalism) and cites the work of Damon Runyon, Frank O'Malley and Herbert Bayard Swope. In an interview, Elmore Leonard talks about the influence of journalism and Hollywood on his fiction. The concluding chapter, a review essay by Robert W. Snyder, considers five books, including Jacob Riis' *How the Other Half Lives* and *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens.*

•

Jeffery J. Mondak, ***Nothing to Read: Newspapers and Elections in a Social Experiment.*** Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995. 191 pp. Cloth, $39.50. Paper, $16.95.

Mondak, a University of Pittsburgh political scientist, looks at the role of newspapers in disseminating campaign information and the effect of that information on voting behavior. He compares two cities with very similar demographics, Pittsburgh and Cleveland, during the 1992 election campaign. Because the newspapers in Pittsburgh were on strike, Mondak was presented with a remarkable situation for comparison and contrast. He uses what he calls a "quasi-experimental" methodology that combines "elements of opinion survey and the laboratory experiment." The study shows how many voters are active in seeking out information when the newspaper is not available, and affirms the important role newspapers play in informing voters, particularly in congressional races.

John C. Merrill, ***Existential Journalism***. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1996. First published 1977. 136 pp. Paper, $24.95.

This revised edition of Merrill's philosophical look at journalistic freedom and responsibility — and his call for more individual, personal freedom for journalists — contains a foreword by Everette Dennis of the Freedom Forum Media Studies Center and an introduction by Fred Blevins of Texas A & M and Kyle Cole of Baylor. These and Merrill's opening chapter and postscript place Merrill's ideas within the 1990s journalistic context. Merrill also acknowledges the ideas and movement that have emerged since 1977 that challenge his contentions, particularly the thinking of Christians and MacIntyre. But as Merrill says, the book is essentially the same as the one published in 1977. That includes the book's bibliography, which has not been updated and contains no references to works by the likes of Christians or MacIntyre or to those who agree with Merrill and have built on his ideas and have published since the mid-1970s.

•

Sam G. Riley, ***Biographical Dictionary of American Newspaper Columnists***. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1995. 424 pp. Cloth, $79.50.

Six hundred entries provide basic biographical facts on columnists who have written on "general interest" topics from the Civil War era to the present. Some entries are only six to ten lines long, while others are nearly two pages, and in each Riley tries to provide a sense of the nature of the work of each columnist. Riley says he included the "true giants of column writing, living or dead," all familiar to journalism historians. But also included are a number of local columnists who work for one newspaper, as well as lesser known syndicated columnists. The range, however, is vast, and includes Mikhail Gorbachev and Carlos Fuentes, Lee Iacocca and H. L. Hunt, Joel Chandler Harris and James Thurber, as well as the likes of Eugene Field, Walter Lippmann, Ernie Pyle, Mike Royko, or Ellen Goodman, and a host of columnists familiar only to local newspaper readers.

•

Dan Steinbock, ***Triumph & Erosion in the American Media & Entertainment Industries.*** Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1995. 352 pp. Cloth, $75.

Steinbock, a Finnish scholar who researched his topic with a Fulbright postdoctoral fellowship, focuses on the competitiveness of the mass media and economic forces that shape them. He tries to page understand how the American mass media and entertainment industries have moved from "global ascendancy"

to a condition of "instability and uncertainty." For instance, his introduction has sections that consider supply-side economics, deregulation, and the banking industry. Part I looks at the decline of the television networks and the rise of cable, as well as the nature of the giant conglomerates. Part II deals with media convergence and is titled "Toward Electronic Superhighways." Although the focus is on the 1980s and early 1990s, some early media economic history is briefly considered.

•

Mark N. Trahant, ***Pictures of Our Nobler Selves: A History of Native American Contributions to News Media***. Nashville: The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center, 1995. 45 pp. Paper, free.

Trahant, a Shoshone-Bannock and executive news editor of *The Salt Lake Tribune,* makes a brief foray into identifying and documenting significant American Indian journalists. Trahant begins with an anecdote showing how Hattie Kauffman in 1989 became the first Native-American to report a news story to a national audience when she covered a plane crash for ABC Evening News. He then moves back to the 1820s to *The Cherokee Phoenix* and its editor Elias Boudinot. After Boudinot, Trahan covers several publications, personalities and about 150 years, showing how Native American reporters more recently have influenced coverage.

(Continued from inside front cover)

Those who wish to review books for *American Journalism* or propose a book for review should contact Professor David Spencer at 28 Longbow Place, London, Ontario, Canada N6G 1Y3, (519) 335-5608.

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AMERICAN JOURNALISM

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EDITORIAL PURPOSE: The journal publishes articles, research notes, book reviews, and correspondence dealing with the history of journalism. Such contributions may focus on social, economic, intellectual, political, or legal issues. *American Journalism* also welcomes articles that treat the history of communication in general; the history of broadcasting, advertising, and public relations; the history of media outside the United States; and theoretical issues in the literature or methods of media history.

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All submissions are blind refereed by three readers. The review process typically takes about three months. Manuscripts will be returned only if the author includes a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Research notes typically are four- to eight-page manuscripts, written with less formal documentation. Such notes, which are not blind refereed, may include reports of research in progress, discussion of methodology, annotations on new archival sources, commentaries on issues in journalism history, suggestions for future research, or response to material previously published in *American Journalism*. Authors who wish to contribute research notes are invited to query the editor.

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From the Editor's Desk...

WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE manuscript review? The editor of a scholarly journal achieves semi-celebrity status and is often asked this question. We considered submitting excerpts from really dumb reviews as an answer but rejected the idea, mostly because we don't get many *really* dumb reviews from those who critique manuscripts. We obviously get some that are better than others, and don't mind sharing what works well, in terms of the editor and the author.

Punctuality is first on the list, though it's not necessarily THE most important quality for a good review. It also seems to us that the research under scrutiny ought to be evaluated in terms of what the researcher set out to do. Too often the author is frustrated by comments that suggest an entirely different study; if the work doesn't set out a purpose for writing and then satisfy that purpose, certainly the manuscript needs revision. But to say "do something different" advances scholarship not at all, in our opinion.

Reasons must be advanced for the stance taken. That is, if rejection is recommended, the author is due, in all intellectual fairness, the rationale for that rejection. And recommending acceptance with no supporting narrative does little to put a final edge on the manuscript or reinforce the specific strengths of the piece. The pros and cons of a piece or recommendations for revision need not be extensive (a page or two will usually get to the heart of the project), but they should be as specific as possible. Finally, the golden rule should apply: Treat an anonymous author as you'd like to be treated. Save your savage criticism for the next Schwarzeneger movie. Be direct, fair, and as helpful as possible. Our reviewers, without prompting, tend to do most or all of the above, thank goodness. If you're an AJHA member who has faculty status and haven't reviewed lately, remind us with a note that includes your special interests and current address, and we'll try to put you to good use. And, post this editorial next to your desk.

WBE

The Doctor's Son Covers a Euthanasia Trial: John O'Hara the Journalist

By R. Thomas Berner

The novelist John OHara occasionally applied his literary skills to journalistic efforts, especially in his reportage of a trial in 1950 in which a doctor was accused of murdering a patient. Furthermore, O'Hara used the trial to, in effect, write an epilogue to one of his short stories, "The Doctor's Son."

The novelist John O'Hara is not usually remembered as a journalist or for producing much journalism. Yet he began his writing career as a journalist, first in his hometown of Pottsville, Pennsylvania, and then in the neighboring town of Tamaqua — jobs he was fired from.[1] He left the Anthracite Region of Pennsylvania for New York City and soon had a job at the *New York Herald-Tribune*.[2] But he had literary visions and also pursued publishing fiction in the *New Yorker*, finally getting published in 1928[3] and becoming a regular contributor.[4] His ultimate ambition was to be a novelist, not a journalist.[5]

It was not always clear, though, that O'Hara made such distinctions. This, for example, sounds journalistic: "I would like to write one of those 'blind' profiles, or Character Sketches, or Portraits (by this time you get the

1. Matthew J. Bruccoli, *The O'Hara Concern* (New York: Random House, 1975), 46-47.
2. Ibid, 55.
3. Ibid, 57.
4. Ibid, 58.
5. Ibid, 59.

idea) of a chorine," O'Hara wrote to Harold Ross, the editor of the *New Yorker*, in 1932.[6]

> Specifically, a shaker; one of the burlesque chorines. They have a language all their own; a lot of it too rough for *New Yorker* consumption, but some of it pretty funny and printable. (I must tell you sometime what they mean when they say 'There's a couple of newspaper men out front'.)[7] The piece, of course, would be lovingly handled with that incisive attention to detail which has made me the *New Yorker's* most popular, best loved, oftenest demanded writer. It would be a longish piece . . .[8]

It sounds as though O'Hara is proposing a fairly typical nonfiction profile. But what O'Hara was really proposing and ultimately wrote was a piece of fiction titled "Of Thee I Sing, Baby." It was approximately 2,500 words and Ross published it on 15 October 1932. O'Hara eventually reprinted it in his first collection of short fiction titled *The Doctor's Son and Other Stories.*

The title piece of that collection ties into some journalistic work O'Hara did after he had become a successful novelist. In this case, O'Hara applied his literary skills to his journalistic efforts. He mixed journalism and literature (i.e., fiction) in 1950, when he was hired by the International News Service[9] to write regular essayistic reports from Manchester, New Hampshire, on the trial of Dr. Hermann N. Sander, accused of killing a patient terminally ill with cancer.[10] It is this work and O'Hara's crossover between literature and journalism that is the focus of this paper.

O'Hara was a prolific writer. His biographer and bibliographer, Matthew J. Bruccoli, credits O'Hara with at least thirty-five books, 402 stories, six book reviews, and forty-nine pieces identified as articles or journalism, not including work produced during his nineteen months as a columnist for *Newsweek*, his six months as a columnist for the Trenton, New Jersey, *Sunday*

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6. Matthew J. Bruccoli, *Selected Letters of John O'Hara* (New York: Random House, 1978), 65.

7. According to the late Philip Young, "newspaper men" in a burlesque house were patrons who had covered their laps with newspapers so it wasn't obvious that they were masturbating.

8. Bruccoli, *Selected Letters,* 65.

9. Owned by William Randolph Hearst and merged with United Press on 24 May 1958. "UP and INS Merge to Form United Press International," *Editor & Publisher,* 31 May 1958, 9-11.

10. There are no records on how this assignment came about. In some ways the assignment must have surprised O'Hara or struck him as ironic. In 1929 O'Hara worked as a rewrite man for the Hearst-owned New York *Daily Mirror* but was fired quickly for "tardiness and drunkenness" (Bruccoli, 68). Twelve years later O'Hara favorably reviewed the movie "Citizen Kane," which was loosely based on Hearst's life, and because of subsequent actions against him by Hearst-owned publications assumed that Hearst had it in for him. (Bruccoli, *The O'Hara Concern*, 165).

Times-Advertiser, his thirty-one months as a columnist for *Collier's*, his one-year stint as a columnist for *Newsday,* and his nine months as a columnist for *Holiday.*[11] Among his novels are *Appointment in Samarra, Butterfield 8, A Rage to Live, Pal Joey, Ten North Frederick,* and *From the Terrace.* Some were made into memorable movies.[12]

But most of O'Hara's journalism is, like most journalism, forgettable. His columns are especially contentious and cranky and are not based upon informed opinion, but rather O'Hara's likes and dislikes. Bernard A. Bergman, a onetime *New Yorker* colleague, once said of O'Hara:

> He was highly opinionated and never thought he was wrong.[13] O'Hara just had too many enemies and too many hates ever to do a good column no matter how well he wrote. He was too bitter at not receiving the Nobel Prize and at being blackballed by top social clubs. Columns can't thrive on bitterness alone.[14]

A scholar who examined O'Hara's journalism, particularly his columns, wrote: "At times he can be exceedingly sharp and funny, but more often he is simultaneously embarrassing and infuriating in his vaingloriousness, vindictiveness, and general bellicosity."[15]

In some ways, O'Hara's fiction was journalistic, and some of his fiction shared a common base with his journalism — a not uncommon practice among O'Hara's generation and earlier generations of writers.[16] It was not untypical of O'Hara to apply the techniques of nonfiction to fiction in a way that blurred the distinctions between the two. Much of O'Hara's fiction strove for reality and some of O'Hara's journalism went beyond objective reportage and tried to show, with concision and in few sentences, the mood of an event and of the people in it.

O'Hara was much praised not for his art but for his accuracy.[17] A social historian, O'Hara wrote readable and realistic prose. "His fiction was mimetic,

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11. Bruccoli, *The O'Hara Concern,* 358-99.
12. All but *Appointment* became a movie. Bruccoli, *The O'Hara Concern,* 386. *Appointment* was produced for television by Herbert Bayard Swope Jr. R. Thomas Berner, "Novelist's Study Recreated At University's Library,"*Centre Daily Times,* 7 October 1974, 8.
13. Bernard A. Bergman, "O'Hara and Me," *John O'Hara Journal* 1 (winter 1978-79): 16.
14. Ibid, 16-17.
15. Sheldon Norman Grebstein, *John O'Hara* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1966), 141.
16. William White, ed., *By-line: Ernest Hemingway* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), xi, and Shelley Fisher Fishkin, *From Fact to Fiction: Journalism and Imaginative Writing in America* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), *passim.*
17. And he was sometimes mocked for this. For example, Joan Didion, in an essay titled, "On Keeping a Notebook," first published in *Holiday,* wrote: "And although I

its primary focus on the actuality imitated," Charles W. Bassett says. "He did not want his style, his 'words' to be anything but unobtrusively accurate. He honored verisimilitude, detail, cogency, materialism, precision. O'Hara saw himself as a kind of imaginative observer, recording in an orderly manner the disorders of an often violent social world."[18] O'Hara himself once said: "Prose writing in 1949 I don't think should be anything but accurate. I keep away from figures of speech."[19]

O'Hara attributed his desire to be accurate to his background as a journalist. "A great novelist has to be a great reporter — the greater the reporter the greater the novelist," he once said.[20] Bassett says: "In passages of pure narrative, description, and nondramatic exposition, the newspaper reporter seems to come out in John O'Hara." Bassett places O'Hara's "narrative style somewhere between the *New York Times* and the *Herald-Tribune* — literate, intelligent, lucid prose, combining informality with immediateness."[21]

The editors of an anthology on American literature say that regarding O'Hara merely as a reporter is to undervalue him:

> He was, in fact, far more than a reporter accepting uncritically what he describes and was obviously interested in something far deeper than the mere surfaces. He was interested in human beings and concerned most with what makes them human. He was, too, an ironist and his ironies were based on the contrast between the mere surfaces he so scrupulously reported and the inner life of the characters involved.[22]

And so O'Hara is praised not for his journalism, but for the journalistic skills he applied to his literary efforts. But in the Sander trial, O'Hara became a journalist and applied his talents as a novelist and social historian to nonfiction writing.

Sander was indicted on first degree murder charges because he injected air into the veins of a patient, Abbie C. Borroto, fifty-nine, which allegedly

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think it interesting to know where the girls who travel with the syndicate have their hair done when they find themselves on the West Coast, will I ever make suitable use of it? Might I not be better off just passing it on to John O'Hara?" *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966), 138.

18. Charles W. Bassett, "O'Hara and History," *John O'Hara Journal* 4 (winter 1981): 8.

19. Harvey Breit, "Talk with John O'Hara," *New York Times Book Review,* 4 September 1949, 11.

20 . Peterson Grosvenor, "John O'Hara . . . Two Blows He had to Beat," *London Daily Express*, 4 May 1967, as reprinted in Matthew J. Bruccoli, ed., *An Artist Is His Own Fault.* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), 220-23.

21. Charles W. Bassett, *The Fictional World of John O'Hara,* Ph.D. dissertation (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1964), 207.

22. Cleanth Brooks, R.W.B. Lewis, and Robert Penn Warren, *American Literature: The Makers and the Making,* vol. 2 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973), 2375.

killed her within minutes. The doctor noted on Borroto's death record that he had injected forty cubic centimeters of air into her veins and reportedly told hospital officials later that it was an act of mercy toward a patient in agony. The nurse who kept the records at the Hillsborough County Hospital subsequently reported Sander to authorities.

The trial, which was held in Manchester, New Hampshire, was widely covered and reported.[23] The most complete collection of O'Hara's work appeared in the *Boston Daily Record.*[24] The *Record* was quite proud of the coverage it was providing, explaining it all in a story titled "Get Front Seat for Sander Trial."[25] O'Hara, the *Record* promised, "will paint vivid word portraits of the characters." The *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph,* another Hearst newspaper, promoted International News Service coverage also, by listing the names of O'Hara and other reporters in an advertisement and identifying O'Hara as "author of many best-selling novels."[26] The paper, however, published only two of O'Hara's articles.

Ultimately, the *Record* and the *Sunday Advertiser* published sixteen of O'Hara's articles as accompaniments (called "sidebars" in the newsroom) to the main stories during the three-week trial, and they serve as the sources in this article. O'Hara dispatchers appeared regularly beginning on Monday, 20 February 1950, and continued without interruption until Saturday, 4 March, for which no article can be found. Nor could articles be located for Monday, 6 March, and Tuesday, 7 March.[27]

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23. According to one source, 160 reporters, including representatives from magazines, film, and telegraph, were in Manchester. "160 Reporters on Hand for Sander Trial," *Boston Daily Globe,* 20 February 1950, 18.

24. Bruccoli, *The O'Hara Concern,* 203. At the time of the trial, Hearst owned twenty newspapers (*Dictionary of Literary Biography* 25, 98), all of which would have received the International News Service. I have examined the microfilm of eleven of these newspapers and concur with Bruccoli's assessment that the *Record* contains the best collection of O'Hara's articles.

25. At the time of the trial, the *Record* had the highest circulation of any Boston or Manchester daily newspaper. *Editor & Publisher Yearbook 1950,* 66, gives this breakout: *Record,* 401,655 (morning except Saturday), 386,842 (Saturday); *Sunday Advertiser,* 667,095 (Sunday only); *Post,* 330,456 (morning except Saturday); *Globe* (morning and evening combined) 277,822; *Traveler* 209,778 (except Sunday); *American,* 195,183 (except Sunday), 175,592 (Sunday); *Herald,* 132,300 (morning except Sunday). In Manchester, the morning *News* had a circulation of 27,726 and the evening *Leader* 23,042.

26. 25 February 1950, 4. Hearst owned the *Record,* the *American* and the *Advertiser.* He eventually purchased the *Herald Traveler.*

27. Based on my comparison of the *Record's* trial coverage and the content of O'Hara's articles, I believe he provided International News Service with articles for those days but they were not published. Some of what the *Record* reported as occurring in the trial on Friday, 3 March, appears in the O'Hara article of 5 March. No O'Hara article mentions the testimony of 4, 6, or 7 March. The 7 March coverage focused on the testimony of Dr. Sander and since the *Record* appears to have published a verbatim transcript of his testimony, it is likely the editors lacked space

Various Hearst newspapers published O'Hara's articles in different areas of the newspaper, with the *Record* at first putting O'Hara on its editorial page. Eventually, the *Record* placed O'Hara's pieces alongside other stories on the trial. Other Hearst newspapers varied in their placement and length[28] of O'Hara's articles. Some newspapers also provided their own editor's note, which ranged from explanatory to evaluative.

Somewhat surprisingly, O'Hara is, with one exception, unmentioned in the few stories about the press coverage of the trial — surprising because O'Hara was not an unknown author in 1950. The year before the trial, he had published *A Rage to Live*, which went through eight printings by Random House in 1949 alone. It was "the first book by John O'Hara to achieve a huge sale."[29] On the day before the trial began, *Rage* was sixth the *New York Times'* best seller list for the third week in a row on and had been fifth a month before.[30] Another contract writer covering the trial was the novelist Fannie Hurst, who is mentioned in news accounts about trial coverage.[31] The *Boston Globe*, which published on Sundays a section called "The *Globe's* Weekly Literary News and Comment," never interviewed O'Hara or Hurst,[32] which seems would have been a bonus story for the section. Of course, O'Hara and Hurst were writing for Hearst, which owned rival newspapers in Boston.[33]

Time's story on the press coverage was mostly negative, accusing some of the journalists of sensationalism and bad writing. O'Hara got two sentences: "Novelist John O'Hara, also a special for Hearst, found the going tougher [than Fannie Hurst did]. For one day, he was reduced to telling how a reporter had lost a squabble over a seat in the crowded court; he neglected to mention that the reporter was O'Hara."[34]

But such an article does not exist, unless it is one of the missing columns, which is doubtful. Instead, O'Hara devoted his eighth article to discussing the rising level of tension in the community and the courtroom. Very late in the article O'Hara wrote: "A newspaper and a radio reporter had a few words at the last session over who would sit where, and this had to be adjudicated

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for O'Hara. I cannot believe that O'Hara would not have written a column about the testimony of the defendant.

28. It appears that some newspapers used O'Hara's articles for filler and cut them the old-fashioned way — from the bottom up.

29. Bruccoli, *The O'Hara Concern*, 192.

30. "The Best Sellers," *New York Times Book Review*, 19 February 1950, 8.

31. See "Newsmen on Sander Trial Honored," *New Hampshire Morning Union*, 27 February 1950, 16; photographic spread on the trial, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 5 March 1950, 2; "Not Since Scopes?" *Time*, 13 March 1950, 44.

32. Nothing by Hurst appears in the *Times'* list.

33. The *Post-Dispatch* photo caption on Hurst describes her as a "novelist and former St. Louisan" and says she was covering the trial for "a news service." It is not surprising that the newspaper, whose publisher was Joseph Pulitzer II, would not mention a Hearst enterprise. Outraged by a comment Hearst had made about his father, Pulitzer II once threw a punch at Hearst. See Daniel W. Pfaff, *Joseph Pulitzer II and the Post-Dispatch* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 71.

34. "Not Since Scopes?" *Time*, 13 March 1950, 44.

by a bailiff, who ruled in favor of the radio man." O'Hara merely wanted to exemplify that even members of the press were tense. Not mentioning his name appears to be trying to keep the focus of the sentence on the tension, not the journalists.

O'Hara waited until the second article to begin probing the mood of the event. In his column about opening day of the trial, O'Hara began with a literary allusion, describing some of the prospective jurors as "right out of Edith Wharton's 'Ethan Frome' " — a controversial novel when it was first published in 1911.

Five years before the trial, Lionel Trilling had praised O'Hara's latest book, *Pipe Night*, in a front-page review in the *New York Times Book Review*.

> He has the most precise knowledge of the content of our subtlest snobberies of our points of social honor and idiosyncrasies of personal prestige. He knows, and persuades us to believe, that life's deepest intentions may be expressed by the angle at which a hat is worn, the pattern of a necktie, the size of a monogram, the pitch of a voice, the turn of a phrase of slang, a gesture of courtesy and the way it is received.[35]

The same could be said of O'Hara's coverage of the Sander trial. In his second article, O'Hara wrote:

> Both Dr. Sander and his wife seem unconcerned; reasonably attentive, but hardly more so than any other spectator in the room.
>
> Their chairs were placed at an angle so that Mrs. Sander had her back to her husband. Occasionally she would whisper something to him, covering her mouth with her hand, and he would have to lean forward to get what she was saying.

Two paragraphs later O'Hara wrote: "Dr. Sander wore a dark blue suit and bright blue necktie, neat enough, but not in the Dartmouth tradition of well dressed men."[36]

"He has ulcer lines, or deep furrows from his nostrils down past his mouth, and a frown that won't come off."

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35. "John O'Hara Observes Our Mores," *New York Times Book Review*, 18 March 1945, 1.

36. According to the *Record*, Sander graduated from Dartmouth College. O'Hara does not make this connection in his article, but New England readers would know that Dartmouth is in New Hampshire and O'Hara probably wasn't concerned for those readers who missed the allusion.

This is what Alvin H. Goldstein of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* wrote:

> Except for his wife, a thin, mousy-looking, plainly garbed woman without rouge or lipstick who huddles near him as separate chairs permit, Dr. Sander is as alone in the crowded courtroom of his own home county as if he were a castaway on an uninhabited island. On rare occasions Mrs. Sander whispers in his ear, but his lips seldom move in response and never does he initiate a whispered exchange.[37]

O'Hara was quick to contrast. He said of the defense attorney, Louis E. Wyman, seventy-one: "He has straight white hair that he permits to fall casually over the left temple, and his face is free of lines."

As the son of a doctor whom he had accompanied on rounds when a teenager and had lionized in his fiction, O'Hara understood the routine and employed this knowledge in the Sander trial. When the jurors were taken to the hospital where the alleged crime occurred, O'Hara wrote:

> Instead of a doctor's usual routine when he goes to his hospital — the parking of the car at a place reserved for staff physicians, the exchange of greetings with the office people, the interchange of small talk with the other doctors, and the actual calls on the sick and wounded — instead of the old familiar routine Dr. Sander, now on trial for first degree murder, was accompanied by the lawyers who are acting in his defense, by other lawyers who hope to convict him of major crime, by the thirteen men who will pass upon the arguments for and against him, by court attaches, and by about half of the contingent of correspondents who are here to tell the world about it all. On this visit he was not accompanied by his wife. . . .He was just there because he had to be. He seemed not to expect to greet or be greeted, and that was just as well, since no one spoke to him.
>
> Five or six nurses in uniform and two or three who were off-duty passed within arm's length of the doctor, but there was no sign of recognition either by the doctor or the nurses.

Nor did O'Hara forget the dead woman:

> Down the narrow hall toward the direction of the obstetrical rooms was the tiny square bedroom in which Mrs. Borroto passed her last days on earth.

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37. "Sander a Man Who Walks Alone; Aloofness Possible Clue to Act," *Record,* 26 February 1950, sec. 7A.

> It, too, is a cheerless cubicle, with a white iron bed, a knotty pine dresser, and, when I saw it, no chair. The walls are blue-green.
>
> If she had wanted to, Mrs. Borroto could look out her window and watch the traffic on the state highway, or stare across the road at the uninspiring House of Correction.

In comparison, the *Record's* account focuses on what those present did, the rooms they visited, and the distance from the records room to the deceased's room and then to the diet kitchen.

> The jurors studied the size of the corridor, and then moved down through an archway and, after traveling about thirty-five feet, came to the small death room. The jury crammed inside.
>
> There was little said except by [William L.] Phinney [attorney-general and prosecutor], who described the contents.
>
> It contained a white metal bed, two chairs, and a dresser.
>
> Here, Dr. Sander stood alone outside the threshold, apparently unconcerned to what was going on in front of him.[38]

One of O'Hara's strong suits in covering the trial was reporting not only what happened, but what didn't happen — as when Mrs. Sander did not accompany her husband to the hospital — and to contrast what did and did not happen. In one article, he wrote about Sander:

> He can sit for five minutes without changing the position of his feet, and did so today except when Dr. Loverud was saying that the reason for swabbing a patient's arm was for cleansing purposes.
>
> At that point both Dr. Sander and his wife simultaneously shifted their feet.
>
> But they sat very still while another witness, William L. Caine, an undertaker, went into a professional explanation of the technique and reasons for embalming. At that point almost everyone changed position, and one or two sensitive persons left the courtroom.

The *Record* reported none of the undertaker's testimony.

The next day the prosecution called to the stand the nurse and medical librarian, who alerted authorities to the alleged crime. "On her way to the stand," O'Hara wrote of Josephine Connor, "she had to pass behind Dr. Sander and his wife so close that not only could she have touched them, but not to do so required some caution."

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38. Paul Whelton and Joseph Purcell, "Ill Attorney May Stop 'Mercy' Trial," *Record,* 23 February 1950, 36.

And, then, with the nurse on the stand: "Not once in the two days she has been testifying has she glanced at Dr. and Mrs. Sander, but it should be added that not once have they taken their eyes off her."

Most of the *Record's* main stories were virtual transcriptions of parts of the testimony and presented in question and answer format. But the newspaper also published sidebars, some of which were written by a female reporter and focused on the females in the trial. In one such story, the *Record* reported that Connor did not look at the doctor and his wife, but did report: "The doctor, however, watched her with the almost amused detachment of one who is seeing an old acquaintance perform exactly as might be expected of her."[39]

Remember Trilling's assessment of O'Hara's fiction, that it shows "precise knowledge of the content of our subtlest snobberies, of our points of social honor and idiosyncrasies of personal prestige." The same can be said of O'Hara's coverage of the Sander trial. Among the issues were the prospective jurors' religious beliefs and views toward euthanasia.[40] O'Hara reported, for example, that the judge made sure certain lines of questioning were not pursued with prospective jurors. "Somehow, though, the impression got out — whether through the press or otherwise it is not for me to say — that it was important for defense counsel to know whether a man was a member of, for example, the Knights of Columbus."[41]

Having made that point, O'Hara went on to label Manchester "a community of active 'joiners' " from which one could divine life-and-death philosophical beliefs. But he also made a distinction about social class and education. "It is now no violation of the court's will to remark that not once in the examination of prospective jurors did I hear a man being asked if he belonged to Delta Kappa Epsilon, for instance, or Sigma Chi." This was O'Hara's elliptical way of saying that most of the jurors were not college educated, but that the lawyers and the doctors in the case not only had several degrees, some from the same Ivy League university, but also belonged to fraternities.[42]

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39. Helen Farlow, "Two Women Ex-Friends Come to Grips in Trial," *Record*, 25 February 1950, 17.

40. Helen Farlow and Joseph Purcell, "Shirk Jury Duty in Mercy Killing," *Record*, 18 February 1950, 3. "Not the least factor will be religious views which may be held by the 160 veniremen called up, or moral beliefs on euthanasia. There will be the question of bias, of opinions already formed, the matter of views on capital punishment."

41. And in fact, the *Record*, in naming the jurors, always listed their religion. Catholics 9, Protestants 4 (including the alternate), 23 February 1950, 3. Joseph Driscoll of the *Post-Dispatch* led one of his stories by emphasizing that the jury was predominantly Catholic. "9 Catholics on Jury in 'Mercy Killing' Trial of Cancer Patient's Physician," 22 February 1950, 1. Six weeks before the trial a Catholic priest in Manchester gave a sermon condemning euthanasia, although he did not mention Sander. *Record*, "N.H. Pastor Defies 'Gag,' " 9 January 1950, 9.

42. Joseph Purcell, "9 of 13 Mercy Juors Catholics," *Record*, 23 February 1950, 40. The employment background of each juror: branch manager of the Public Service Co., liquor commission clerk, contract carpenter, mill worker, restaurant baker, real estate operator, poultryman and trucking firm operator (and "prominent member of a

In another article, O'Hara described the chief medical examiner for the city of New York, who was testifying as an expert witness. "With the key of Alpha Omega Alpha, honorary medical fraternity, dangling from his watch chain, Dr. Helpern stood there and took the best that Mr. Wyman could offer without losing his temper or his composure."

Elsewhere in the *Record,* Helpern's badges were reported this way: "Dr. Milton Helpern, New York's deputy chief medical examiner [sic] was the last witness for the state. After he had listed his length [sic] qualifications as a pathologist, Atty.-Gen. Phinney immediately began striking to the heart of the testimony."[43]

When the dead woman's nurse testified, O'Hara found poetry in her words.

> It was a detailed, repetitious recital, but in no way monotonous.
>
> Alcohol rub and powder . . . sips of water . . . ice cream . . . placed patient on rubber ring . . . ounce of tea . . . patient had difficulty swallowing . . . oil to lips . . . demerol . . . sips of water . . . oil to lips . . . alcohol rub . . . changed position . . . shallow breathing . . . patient did not want hypodermic . . . ointment to red areas . . . drug administered sub-Q . . . patient responds . . . oil to lips.

"Once," O'Hara observed, "she lapsed unconsciously into verse when she said: 'Oil to the lips, water in sips.'"

Neither the *Record's* main story on the trial nor its sidebar on the women in the trial noted this. O'Hara, of course, had an advantage. Whereas the *Record* covered events as they occurred daily, O'Hara was able to take in a larger picture. His thirteenth column is an example.

The thirteenth column evoked more than the usual editor's note at the *New York Daily Mirror*, which proclaimed: "Here is the finest story that has come out of the 'mercy slaying' trial of Dr. Hermann N. Sander. Simply and touchingly, it gives you a clearer understanding of the Manchester, N.H., drama — though it is not about Dr. Sander at all, but about another small-town doctor."[44]

The other small-town doctor was O'Hara's father, and the article invites comparison with O'Hara's short story "The Doctor's Son," published in 1935.[45]

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number of fraternal organizations"), retired real estate operator, weaver (this was the foreman of the jury), paper mill operator, shoe factory foreman, shoe worker, and farmer (the alternate).

43. Paul Whelton and Joseph Purcell, "Sander Thought Patient Dead," *Record*, 3 March 1950, 28.

44. "Why Manchester Roots for Its Small-Town Doctor," *Daily Mirror*, 9 March 1950, 2.

45. John O'Hara, *The Doctor's Son and Other Stories* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1935).

The column shows the roots of O'Hara's story, and comparison of the short story with the newspaper essay demonstrates the common base that helped form some of O'Hara's fiction and nonfiction.

In the short story, O'Hara is represented by James Malloy,[46] whose physician father is ill, although not dying. In the column, O'Hara begins by writing of his father's premature death from overwork at age fifty-seven in 1925.

O'Hara uses the Sander trial to recapture some of his teenage experiences, with his father as the central character. He recalls, for example, the time his father "broke a man's jaw with one punch because the man, a member of the Ku Klux Klan, called him a 'Mollie Maguire'." In the short story, the victim is an officious policeman who stopped the doctor for speeding while he was rushing to deliver a baby. Bruccoli records the dispute as occurring between the doctor and a teamster who called him a "four-eyed Irish bastard."[47]

In the short story, the narrator, the doctor's son, tells how when his father becomes ill during a flu epidemic, "Italians who knew me would even ask me to prescribe for their children, simply because I was the son of Mister Doctor Malloy." In the trial-derived article about his father, O'Hara boasts that because his father could speak Italian, "he was the only man who could enter a certain part of town during a Black Hand war."[48]

In some ways, the O'Hara article is an epilogue to the short story. The story tells of the doctor's busy life and foretells of his later habit of overworking. O'Hara used the Sander trial as a vehicle to conclude "The Doctor's Son."

What O'Hara did not use the Sander trial for was a blueprint for any subsequent fiction. While O'Hara receives accolades for his verisimilitude, he once declared: "I do not write what is called the *roman à clef.*"[49] He is correct. There is no other work by O'Hara that is even remotely connected to the Sander case. In the short story "Afternoon Waltz,"[50] the main character and a doctor do discuss euthanasia twice and the main character assists his mother in dying, but euthanasia is not the driving force of the story. The story takes place around 1900, a half century before the Sander trial.

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46. Bruccoli calls Malloy "semi-autobiographical." *The O'Hara Concern*, 16.
47. Bruccoli, *The O'Hara Concern,* 12.
48. The article also mentions an incident not in the short story. "I remember," O'Hara wrote, "that one night when he was in white tie and tails, on his way to a medical club dinner, he crawled under a trolley car to free a newsboy who had been run over by the car." Three years later, in December of 1953, as O'Hara was preparing for a visit to his old hometown of Pottsville, Pennsylvania, columnist Walter S. Farquhar, a friend of O'Hara's, mentioned the accident, but told it differently. This resulted in two follow-up columns as people who remembered different accidents gave their versions as though it had been one accident. Finally, Mrs. O'Hara, the novelist's mother, gave her account as an eyewitness, saying that yes the doctor did crawl under a trolley once, but it was to aid a trapped girl. When the newsboy was injured in a different accident, she said he was taken to Dr. O'Hara's office.
49. *An Artist Is His Own Fault*, 24. In the same lecture, he admitted that *Butterfield 8* was *roman à clef.*
50. *Saturday Evening Post,* 23 April 1966, 56-74.

John O'Hara found art in life and blurred the distinctions between nonfiction and fiction both in his subject matter and his techniques. While most of his journalism falls into the commentary category and is unmemorable, his coverage of a euthanasia trial in Manchester, New Hampshire, in 1950 demonstrates the bond of verisimilitude between O'Hara's fiction and his journalism. Far from being unmemorable, the articles represent some of O'Hara's best journalism.

Epilogue

The jury took sixty-eight minutes to find Sander not guilty.[51]

"O'Hara's M.D. Dad Rushed, Like Sander"[52]

"John O'Hara published more words than any other major American writer, but he kept no records — not even scrapbooks — of his work," Matthew J. Bruccoli writes. "[M]ost of O'Hara's journalism is still unidentified." [53] Bruccoli mentioned the existence of the articles discussed here and made it easy to locate them. Reprinted here is the O'Hara piece about his father.

MANCHESTER, N.H. (INS) — What I am about to say has to do with the Sander case, but contrary to the usual journalist form, the important facts are not going to be stated early in the piece.

About twenty-five years ago a man got off a Pullman car in a small town in Pennsylvania.

He was wearing a polo coat and tweed cap and he was being accompanied by a porter. I had a small roadster waiting at the station and when I saw the man I went to him and kissed him, because he was my father.

I took him by the hand and led him to the little car and drove him home. I got him upstairs to hi bedroom, and helped him undress — he had had no luggage on the train — and put him to bed. In a week's time, less one day, he died.

What he died of was overwork.

It didn't say overwork on the death certificate.

VACATION FAILED

After all these years I remember that when I saw my father stepping off that train, I didn't know him. I recognized his clothes — the polo coat and the cap. He belonged to a generation that believed that when you travel, you wear a cap. He was also extremely fond of his polo coat.

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51. Paul Whelton and James Purcell, "Dr. Sander Freed on 1st Ballot," *Record*, 10 March 1950, 3.

52. John O'Hara, *Record*, 8 March 1950, 21.

53. *John O'Hara: A Checklist* (New York: Random House, 1972), v.

A couple of months before this meeting with me he had announced to our family that he was going to take a vacation in Florida. That delighted my mother. "Doctor," she said, "it's about time."

Only a few old-fashioned people will know that a wife in those days could call her husband (and father of her eight children) "Doctor."

And so my father went to Florida, and we heard very little from him, but we assumed he was playing golf and getting his health back and putting a small of large bet down on the horses. We assumed he was getting his health back.

At the time he went to Florida he was in bad shape. He was five feet eleven, weighing 175, and fifty-seven years old.

BARBER KNEW

If you took a quick look at him you would say he was not in bad shape at all, but his barber knew he was in bad shape. Cuts didn't heal so quickly any more, and the barber even stopped me on the street to tell me my father, whom he shaved every morning, was not waking up very quickly after the hot and cold towels. The barber was worried.

My father was the leading surgeon in a part of the world where good surgeons are not rare. He was a great doctor. He could get out of bed at two in the morning and tell me to get out of bed and help him hitch the horses to a sleigh and drive to the hospital.

That one I remember especially: A runaway train wreck, and I, a kid of maybe twelve, had to hold the hand of one man who was dying of burns and another man who was dying after amputation of both legs. These men just wanted to have a hand to hold on the way out. The nurses were busy.

My father also believed that a man owed something to the community in general, and for that reason he served on the YMCA. Fund Committee and the Red Cross and things like that.

He also founded a hospital. He bought the first operating table. with his own money.

I remember that one night when he was in white tie and tails, on his way to a medical club dinner, he crawled under a trolley car to free a newsboy who had been run over by the car.

I remember that, because he spoke Italian, he was the only man who could enter a certain part of town during a Black Hand war.

I remember that he broke a man's jaw with one punch because the man, a member of the Ku Klux Klan, called him a "Mollie Maguire."

HONORED BY ALL

He came home to die. The Pullman people sent us a telegram and had a porter escort him all the way home, a fact which I never forget when dealing with Pullman porters. He had a funeral almost as big as a gangster's or a politician's, and he left no money to speak of.

But the people who turned up at the church — the Protestants and Jews as well as the Catholics — were not there only for the spectacle.

Thus a small town doctor.

Most of these things I have not thought of since they became fact, until I came up here to report on the Sander case.

Some of the men and women who are covering the trial have been unable to comprehend the emotional loyalty of the witnesses for Dr. Sander. But I think I can.

I may have my own opinions in this case, but I think I can understand why this man or that woman might want to speak in behalf of a small-town doctor.

The author is a professor of journalism and American studies at the Pennsylvania State University. ***Berner dedicates this work to the late Philip Young, Evan Pugh Professor Emeritus of English, the Pennsylvania State University, and in appreciation to Stanley Weintraub, Evan Pugh Professor of Arts and Humanities, the Pennsylvania State University, and Charles W. Mann, Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts at the Pattee Library of the Pennsylvania State University.***

Forerunner of the 'Dark Ages': Philadelphia's Tradition of a Partisan Press

By Patricia Bradley

This article describes how the national party press of the 1790s emerged from the influence of long-accepted Philadelphia press practices of partisan support during the struggle between the Quaker and Proprietary Parties.

When journalism historian and educator Frank Luther Mott referred to the political press of the early republic as "The Dark Ages of Partisan Journalism,"1 he summarized a historiography that defined and, in large part, dismissed the nation's early political journalism on the basis of its use of personal invective. As an earlier journalism historian, James Melvin Lee, wrote, in a typical example, the nation's early press "abounded in little else than libelous and scandalous personal attacks. The new freedom of the press promoted not truth but calumnies and falsehoods."2 Such historiography is perhaps not surprising for educators who sought to establish press values in a professional setting. Unfortunately, remnants of the motif are still found in today's textbook summaries of the period, most always noting Benjamin Franklin Bache's famous attack on Washington and emphasizing the range of personal abuse that existed in the press—all lively and interesting reading but still suggesting a "how far we have come" approach to press history.

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1. Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism A History: 1690-1960*, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 167.
2. James Melvin Lee, *History of American Journalism* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1917), 101.

Wm. David Sloan is one current scholar calling for reexamination of this familiar theme. "[I]f the press vituperation is seen in perspective, it appears a less important part of the history. . . their techniques were more varied and better-reasoned than historians commonly have acknowledged." Sloan argues the scurrility of the period should be understood in terms of its place and time rather than modern journalistic practices.3

As part of this discussion, we would suggest that defining the early party press in terms of scurrility alone tends to frame the period as a discrete and aberrational "chapter" in American press history. Such framing diminishes other influences in the history of the American press, making ancillary rather than central the role of the political press in the next century, ignoring the considerable party press history that existed before the Revolution, and establishing free speech only in terms of today's understanding. However, the emphasis in this article is to to provide the context out of which the national party press of the 1790s emerged, suggesting the political press of that period represented the influence of long-accepted Philadelphia press traditions. These were traditions that were partisan rather than impartial.

This emphasis on the partisanship of Philadelphia's colonial newspapers runs counter to work by Stephen Botein,4 whose discussion of the colonial press as impartial has led to a simplified understanding of the role of the colonial press in the intricacies of colonial politics preceding the Revolution. Philadelphia, for example, in its long colonial history, never produced any semblance of an impartial press, Franklin's "Apology for Printers" notwithstanding.

Philadelphia's colonial press traditions were closely tied to the nature of Philadelphia as a city and to the particular culture of the city itself. As an entrepreneurial city that by the late colonial period had seen a dozen newspapers vie for business5 in a depressed market, the economic benefits of impartiality were uncertain for Philadelphia printers, and it was not difficult for the city's many specialized interests to find a willing printer. However, the need for Philadelphia printers to find work in hard economic times, particularly in the 1760s, was further influenced by its entrepreneurial culture and the role of Benjamin Franklin in Pennsylvania politics.

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3. Wm. David Sloan, "Scurrility and the Party Press, 1789-1816," *American Journalism* 5 (1988): 98.

4. Stephen Botein, " 'Meer Mechanics' and an Open Press: The Business and Political Strategies of Colonial American Printers," *Perspectives in American History* 9 (1979): 140-150.

5. Charles R. Hildeburn, *A Century of Printing the Issues of the Press in Pennsylvania 1685-1784* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1968; reprint of 1835 edition by Matlack and Harvey), 165-178.

The Political City

From the establishment of Pennsylvania as a proprietary rather than a royal colony and the settlement and growth of Philadelphia along varied rather than homogenous lines, Philadelphia quickly developed particular as opposed to communal interests. Sam Bass Warner Jr. used the word "privatism" to describe colonial Philadelphia as a culture in which individual placed the accumulation of personal wealth and the protection of the family sphere above ideological considerations. Rule, in this context, was to provide an environment in which private gain could flourish. "The community should keep the peace among individual moneymakers, and, if possible, help to create an open and thriving setting where each citizen would have some substantial opportunity to prosper."6 The public good and private gain were generally interchangeable.

But for many Philadelphians, opportunity for prosperity was substantially reduced because of the nature of the proprietary government. The Pennsylvania Assembly, dominated by a Quaker majority (later joined by other factions) was, from early in the colony's history, at odds with the proprietary representative who ruled the purse. By the 1750s these interests had become so diametrically opposed that the Assembly actively sought to replace the proprietary government with a royal one.7

But even given the political base of the Quaker Party, certainly strengthened by Benjamin Franklin's association, the Proprietors hardly stood alone. The Proprietary Party was composed of Philadelphia's elite, merchants and traders, wealthy Quakers, and as much "old wealth" as a new city could muster — that is, families who had prospered under proprietary rule and its corollary of connections and appointments to lucrative office. Given the Quaker Party challenge, the Proprietary Party would later expand its base of supporters, drawing to it Presbyterians and other opponents of Quaker pacifism. However, it was not just objections to Quaker pacifism or to a royal colony that drew new blood to the proprietary side; political allegiance was also connected to class.

In the late colonial period, class would be a divisive issue as barricades rose to prevent mobility. But in the society of early Philadelphia, the ramparts of the social climb were more easily broached. It was hardly a classless society, but it was a city of permeability. Class boundaries were not so severe or opportunities for wealth so rare that talented artisans before 1750 could not leave their craft and move into the genteel classes.8 And as successful artisans

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6. Sam Bass Warner, Jr. *The Private City Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth,* rev. ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1987), 4.

7. Theodore Thayer, *Pennsylvania Politics and the Growth of Democracy 1740-1776* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1953).

8. One author found a third of the merchant group he studies had begun their careers in lesser occupations. Thomas M. Doerflinger, *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 50. Another scholar of the period notes, Philadelphia artisans "were far likelier to attain a level of wealth that entitled them to think of

changed their class, they might also change their political affiliations, prompted both by private interests that higher class affiliations offered, as well as tangible evidence of "making it."9 Colonial Philadelphia had ample examples of men who changed political affiliations — Joseph Reed, Benjamin Rush, Charles Thomson, John Dickinson, William Bradford, and Benjamin Franklin. Ideology did not stand alone; business, class, and opportunity each played a part.

The permeability of early society gave to the city a civil atmosphere. Taverns of the period tended to cater to a mixed clientele. An artisan might be "treated" by a member of a higher class,10 encouraging deference to be sure, but also suggesting that today's deferential drinking acquaintance could be tomorrow's business partner. Such an atmosphere made it possible for the young Robert Morris to be taken from poor circumstances by Thomas Willing, Philadelphia's leading merchant and mayor, to become one of the city's wealthiest merchants. Similarly, the young Franklin had the opportunity to move in select circles. Tolerance existed not only because of the Quaker influence, but also because tolerance was good business in an entrepreneurial based society. Even political enemies did business together. Benjamin Franklin cooperated with his political opponent Andrew Bradford to the point that Bradford's biographer believed they were on "amicable terms."11 Franklin had no difficulty in selling supplies to his political opponents, including three generations of the Bradford family.12

Thus, a confluence of impulses set the stage for the growth of Philadelphia's political press — the availability of willing printers, well-matched political divisions, and, for the time, a lack of repressive boundaries—all under the dome of the Enlightenment that, though fading, still acknowledged the complicated world the written word could represent. Perhaps none of this intellectual kindling would have sparked without the influence of Benjamin Franklin. His involvement in Pennsylvania politics was immense and the

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themselves as middle class" compared to artisans in Boston. Gary B. Nash, *Urban Crucible, Social, Change, Political Consciousness and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 121.

9. For a portrayal of upward mobility in Philadelphia as a colonial city, see Alexander Graydon, *Memoirs of a Life, Chiefly Passed in Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: John Wyeth, 1811; reprinted, Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1822). Graydon, although raised by a widowed mother who ran a boarding house, was a Proprietary Party member and later a Federalist.

10. Peter Thompson, "A Social History of Philadelphia Taverns, 1683-1800," (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1989). Thompson writes, "(P)rior to the Stamp Act crisis, Philadelphia's public houses were unspecialized as to both service and usage. . . Rich and poor could be found drinking together in any of the city's public houses," *i.*

11. Anna J. De Armond, *Andrew Bradford Colonial Journalist* (Newark, Del.: University of Delaware Press, 1949), 214.

12. George Moranda, "The Finances of Benjamin Franklin's Printing House" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1964). George Simpson Eddy, ed., *Account Books Kept by Benjamin Franklin, Ledger D* (New York: n.p., 1929).

Franklin press both moored and helped define Philadelphia's political journalism.

Franklin arrived in a city that already had a political press. As we know from narratives of the growth of American press freedom, William Bradford confronted Quaker authority but was freed from imprisonment by the intervention of New York's royal governor (whom he would serve as royal printer and come to chastise Peter Zenger for publication of pieces tending to "set the province in a flame.")13 For the purpose here, it should be emphasized that Bradford's troubles were not a result of his performing an impartial watchdog role in a modern sense or from a call for press freedom for ideological reasons, but rather resulted from his role as an important player in a particular faction.

Bradford's son, Andrew, returned to Philadelphia, established *The American Weekly Mercury* and made for himself a successful world that crossed artisan and gentry boundaries, indicative of the fluidity of the city's society in the first part of the century. Bradford was an established and profitable printer in 1723 when Benjamin Franklin arrived, bringing to the opportunities of the city a strategic — enemies would later say scheming — nature.

From his own account in the *Autobiography*, Franklin gained prominence by using Andrew's *Mercury* to discredit Samuel Keimer and his *Pennsylvania Gazette*, enabling him to purchase it "for a trifle."14 But it is to ignore Franklin's political connections to interpret the "Busy-Body Papers" primarily in terms of a Franklin strategy to obtain the *Gazette* cheaply. Despite the persona of his famous apology,15 Franklin was no simple artisan, and by the time of the "Busy-Body Papers" he had already moved into influential circles, first as one of the chosen young men around James Logan, and later, and not very successfully for him, playing the same role to the colony's governor, Sir William Keith.16 None of those early alignments, however, contributed more to the political positioning of *The American Weekly Mercury* vis-a-vis The

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13. Quoted by Leonard W. Levy, *Emergence of a Free Press* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 25. For discussion, see De Armond, 16-18.

14. Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, A Genetic Text,* J.A. Lemay and P.M. Zalled, eds. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981), 64.

15. "An Apology for Printers," *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 10 June 1731; reprinted in *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin,* 10 vols., Albert Smyth, ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1905-1907), 11: 172-179. The apology was in response to what was taken as an attack on the Anglican clergy, hardly an accident considering the colonial fear of an Anglican bishopric. The abbreviated versions of the apology that appear in journalism history texts tend to encourage understanding at a face level.

16. The *Autobiography* frames Keith only in terms of a Franklin mentor who did not come through. Franklin's involvement with Keith came by way of Keith's suspected ambition to overthrow the Penns in favor of himself by building a popular movement of city dwellers and farmers with an agenda that called for protection of the poor. The Penns saw fit to remove him. Thomas Wendel, "The Keith-Lloyd Alliance: Faction and Coalition Politics in Colonial Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 92 (1968): 289-305 (hereafter *PMHB*).

Pennsylvania Gazette than Franklin's political mentor and Bradford's arch enemy, Andrew Hamilton, the colony's attorney general and speaker of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, a man who, as Franklin wrote, "interested himself to me strongly."17 Bradford and Hamilton had a long, disputatious history that predated Franklin. Bradford blamed Hamilton for his censure by the Governor's Council in 1721.18 But at the conclusion of the "Busy-Body Papers," just as Franklin was about to take over the *Gazette*, Hamilton also played a role in Bradford's near removal from the printing business altogether. On the basis of another critical essay, Bradford found himself charged with seditious libel, followed by his arrest and brief confinment.19

The role of the Bradford/Hamilton dispute in defining the role of Franklin in the city's early political journalism played out again in the Zenger trial. Bradford was not anxious to promote Hamilton as the defender of liberty when the "Philadelphia Lawyer" (as Hamilton's tombstone in Christ Church, Philadelphia, is inscribed) traveled to New York to defend the printer. Further, Bradford's father, William, was now printer for the opposition. The *Mercury* remained mute on the trial, but readers would have been aware that Hamilton was being called to task when Bradford published one of the first indigenous essays on press freedom. Accompanied by a woodcut of a hand holding a quill pen (an unusual illustration for its time), the essay differentiated liberty of the press from license of the press, decrying the use of the press "as an Engine, to insult Personal Deformities, Frailties or Misfortunes much less to expose the secrets of Families" — all elements, interestingly, that would later become hallmarks of Philadelphia's political press. Bradford, apparently in his own voice,20 called for discussion of public issues in high-minded ways for purposes of the public good.

> I mean a Liberty of detecting the wicked and destructive Measures of certain Politicians, of dragging Villainy out of its obscure lurking Holes, and exposing it in its full Deformity to open Day; of attacking Wickedness in high Places, of

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17. *Autobiography,* 64. De Armond, 84-119.

18. Bradford republished a pamphlet in his newspaper that cast doubt on the colony's credit, including a criticism in the last paragraph, apparently in his own voice. *American Weekly Mercury* , 9 January 1721. Bradford claimed his journeyman had composed and inserted the paragraph without his knowledge but he was still censored by the Governor's Council, which included Hamilton, the attorney general, as one of its members. *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania* , 16 vols. (Harrisburg: T. Fenn, 1851-53) 3: 145.

19. The Council ordered the attorney general to make a search of Bradford's premises, which produced the "original document," an essay submitted by a Parson Campbell of Long Island, "a dissolute character." The Council concluded that Bradford published the piece without knowing the essayist's reputation and allowed his release. Ibid., 3: 369.

20. Levy assumes Bradford wrote the essay, an unusual step for a colonial printer and, if so, certainly puts to rest Franklin's charge Bradford was "very illiterate." *Autobiography*, 27.

> disentangling the intricate Folds of a wicked and corrupt Administration, and pleading freely for a Redress of grievances.21

As Bradford continued to use the Zenger trial as a way to attack Hamilton, Franklin connected himself to a popular, pro-Zenger side of an issue (he would fail to do the same during the Stamp Act). He also served his political allegiance to the Hamiltonian faction.

By the late 1750s, Franklin's political agenda was committed to the Quaker Party by which he had prospered as clerk to the Assembly since 1736. But it was Andrew's nephew, William Bradford, proprietor of the *Pennsylvania Journal,* who now served as Franklin's political opposite. Like his uncle, Bradford was a supporter of the Proprietary Party. His tavern, the Old London Coffee, was licensed at the Proprietor's discretion (as were all taverns, thus making taverns Proprietary strongholds and the target for Quaker Party "reform" legislation) and was underwritten by Proprietary business acquaintances; further, his social ambitions were those of the Proprietary class, and customers of his marine insurance business were the elite Proprietary leaders of the city. When its subscriptions lists are examined, the *Journal* appears to have had a paid readership that was almost entirely Proprietary.22 The *Gazette* was clearly the more successful, and its circulation benefitted from Franklin's leadership in Quaker Party politics, whose supporters included western Pennsylvanians, artisans, members of the militia, and many Germans — altogether an amalagam that Franklin and his Philadelphia advisors, Joseph Galloway and John Hughes, kept stitched together under the sentiment that the Proprietary form of government should be replaced by a royal one.

In 1764, prompted by the Paxton Boys imbroglio,23 dissension over the governorship of the province came to a head. John Penn arrived as the colony's lieutenant governor, representing his uncle, Proprietor Thomas. Philadelphia's merchant community, including Bradford and his brother, were on hand with an unctuous and public welcome.24 But as the young Proprietor sought to consolidate his strength (including courtship and marriage to the daughter of the colony's leading Presbyterian, William Allen), the Assembly voted to send an appeal for royal government directly to London. In the pivotal October Assembly election that many believed could decide the governorship, both sides sought every advantage. One of the Proprietary candidates was William Smith, provost of the Philadelphia College, subsequently forced from the Pennsylvania

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21. *The American Weekly Mercury,* 25 April 1734, reprinted in Leonard M. Levy, *Freedom of the Press from Zenger to Jefferson, Early American Libertarian Theories* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), 41.
22. "Subscriptions to the *Pennsylvania Journal,*" Bradford Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter HSP).
23. Brooke Hindle, "The March of the Paxton Boys," *William and Mary Quarterly* 111 (1946): 461-486 (hereafter *WMQ*).
24. "Additional Miscellaneous Letters," Penn Papers, 1:115, HSP, 3rd. series.

colony by the Quaker Assembly because of his role in publishing anti-Quaker tracts.25

In addition to the backstairs maneuvering, the campaign gave a powerful role to the newspapers and presses of Philadelphia. As the organ for the Proprietary Party, the *Journal* was the platform for the new star of the Proprietary group, John Dickinson, who, although critical of the Proprietors, had refused to endorse the Assembly in its drive for a royal colony. In his distinguished prose, his subsequent campaign kept to the issue at hand in pamphlets that Bradford published.26 But distinguished prose did not mark the rest of the campaign. Franklin was excoriated in pamphlets, some published by printers by Philadelphia's cadre of chronically underemployed printers. Smith characterized Franklin as "a very bad man, or one delirious with rage, disappointment and malice."27 Franklin was scheming, another pamphleteer charged, to make himself a governor of a new royal colony in which he planned to hold dictatorial powers. He abused his expense account as colony agent, he could not be trusted with public funds, his honorary degrees were begged, he was mean to his mother. His son William's illegitimate birth was particular fodder; the mother was a household servant. As William Allen's hired penman summed it up:

> Devoid of Principle and
> Ineffably mean,
> Whose Ambition is POWER
> And whose intention is
> TYRANY28

Bradford's press did not print the worst of the scurrility. But the *Pennsylvania Journal* did not need scurrility to be clearly on the Proprietary side. In April, the *Journal* published Smith's petition against Pennsylvania as a royal colony; in August, an account of leaders of Lancaster County congratulating their Assembly representatives for opposing the royal proposal; and in September, increasing the pressure of the newspaper campaign, a *Journal* supplement charged John Hughes with stealing old land warrants, presumably

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25. Bradford and David Hall were also censored but not arrested. Smith's departure also meant the closure of the *American Magazine*, published by Bradford, and thus left the magazine field open again for Franklin. *Colonial Records of Pennsylvania 1757-62*, Samuel Hazard, ed. (Philadelphia: Joseph Severns, 1860), 440-441.

26. Dickinson's Assembly speech, objecting to the censure of the Proprietors, was republished as the pamphlet, "A Speech Delivered in the House of Assembly" (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1764.) See also "A reply to the Piece called the Speech of Joseph Galloway, Esq." (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1764). David L. Jacobson, "John Dickinson's Fight Against Royal Government, 1764," *WMQ* 19 (1962): 64-85.

27. Quoted by J. Phillip Gleason, "A Scurrilous Colonial Election and Franklin's Reputation," *WMQ* 18 (1961): 75.

28. Ibid., 68-94.

preparing for the day when Pennsylvania would be proclaimed royal and he and Galloway could claim large tracts of land on the basis of the warrants.29 For their part, the Quaker party portrayed William Allen, the Proprietary Party leader and the colony's chief justice, as dishonest, immoral, even a stutterer. Fancy genealogies claimed by the Proprietary gentry were ridiculed by noting London fishwives and convicts as the distinguished predecessors.30 By November, the level of discourse prompted Samuel Powel to plead, "In the name of goodness stop your Pamphleteers' Mouths & shut your presses. Such a torrent of low scurrility sure never came from any country as lately from Pennsylvania."31

In the end, in Philadelphia — where the Proprietary press was strongest — it was the Proprietary Party's torrent that overwhelmed the Franklin camp. Dickinson and George Bryan unseated Franklin and Galloway in Philadelphia, although the Quaker Party succeeded elsewhere in the colony. The Quaker Party, however, by retaining its legislative majority, was able to rescue Franklin from ignominy by quickly sending him off to England as assistant colony agent to push for the royal argument in person. The *Journal* objected, publishing John Dickinson's protest.32 But even with Franklin's departure, the campaign would be long remembered in Philadelphia history; one scholar believes it damaged Franklin's reputation into the nineteenth century.33

The Stamp Act

It was into this charged political scene that the Stamp Act arrived. To the Proprietary Party the act seemed to be evidence of their warnings of parliamentary encroachment. But added to that, their opposition finally gave to the party the chance to be on the popular side of an issue. With the exception of Franklin's devoted artisan White Oaks,34 the act had sparked immediate opposition across all classes and factions. Buttressed by this unfamiliar popular support, the Proprietary opposition used the widespread disaffection as a political cudgel against Franklin, who was accused of currying favor with Parliamentary leaders to promote his royal colony. Given this context, it is erroneous to interpret the *Journal's* famous "tombstone makeup" as a conscious foreshadowing of a break with Great Britain, much less an early call for Independence. The tombstone makeup was the culmination of a campaign against the Stamp Act promoted by the Proprietary Party that included the

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29. *Pennsylvania Journal,* 12 April 1764; 16 August 1764; 27 September 1764.
30. Isaac Hunt, *A Humble Attempt at Scurrility* (Philadelphia: Anthony Armbruster, 1764).
31. Samuel Powel to George Roberts, 24 November 1764, "Powel-Roberts Correspondence, 1761" *PMHB* 18 (1984): 40.
32. "Protest," *Pennsylvania Journal,* 1 November 1764.
33. Gleason, 84.
34. James H. Hutson, "An Investigation of the Inarticulate: The White Oaks and their Role during the Stamp Act Crisis," *WMQ* 28 (1971): 3-25.

golden opportunity to discredit the leader of the Quaker Party. The citizens committee which made the intimidating visit to John Hughes, Franklin's longtime political ally and his nominee for stamp distributor, was composed of Proprietary men, including Bradford but led by James Tilghman, a provincial councillor and member of Penn's inner circle.35 Hughes, himself, saw opposition to the act in local party terms as indicated in his correspondence to the London Stamp Office.

> Presbyterians and proprietary minions, spare no pains to engage the Dutch and lower class of people, and render the royal government odious, but at the same time profess great loyalty to the best of kinds, and yet insinuate that his immediate government is intolerable. If his Majesty and his ministers knew the pains taken by the proprietary partisans to give a wrong bias to the minds of his Majesty's subjects, I am confident they would not suffer the powers of government to remain six months in the hands of any proprietor on the continent.36

When the act was repealed, Galloway sought a muted celebration, but he was obliged to report to Franklin, "The city was illuminated by the Proprietary Party."37

The Stamp Act crisis also made clear the importance of a Quaker Party political journal. The *Gazette* had a difficult time walking a middle road in face of the opposition to the Stamp Act. Further, David Hall, Franklin's partner, had proprietary leanings and in 1766, when the long partnership ended, Hall severed *Gazette's* connection with Franklin's politics.38 Galloway, serving as Franklin's lieutenant, sought a new organ and made the disastrous choice in 1767 to hire William Goddard39 to print the *Pennsylvania Chronicle* as the new party organ. It was a short and unhappy alignment. Goddard's sympathies were clearly Patriot, and he had no patience with the colony's politics.

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35. Not coming to Philadelphia until 1760, Tilghman was a member of the Philadelphia Common Council by 1764, and the following year Penn, to block Hughes and his land ownership plans, appointed him secretary of the colony's Land Office. He was a loyalist in the Revolution. Charles P. Keith, *The Provincial Councillors Pennsylvania Who Held Office Between 1733-1766* (Philadelphia: n.p., 1883), 398-401.

36. Reprinted in *Register of Pennsylvania,* Samuel Hazard, ed., 1 November 1828.

37. Quoted by Ernest H. Baldwin, "Joseph Galloway, the Loyalist Politician," *PMHB* 26 (1902), 292.

38. Robert D. Harlan, "David Hall and the Stamp Act," *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America,* William B. Todd, ed., 61 (New York: Bibliographical Society of America, 1967), 13-37.

39. Arthur M. Schlesinger, "Politics, Propaganda, and the Philadelphia Press, 1767-1770," *PMHB* 60 (1936): 309-322. The article deals primarily with the Galloway/Goddard friction and less with the overall nature of the Philadelphia press as suggested by the title.

Party Politics in the Midst of Revolution

Finally, local Philadelphia and colony politics were overwhelmed by the tide of revolutionary fervor promoted by the Massachusetts radicals. John Adams, arriving in Philadelphia with the purpose of drawing the reluctant colony into the revolutionary cause, took advantage of the colony's political division to offer Independence as the third choice. Adams' "Resolve" led the way for Pennsylvanians to call a convention and put in place a new government by proclamation.40 The representatives elected under what was now the 1776 Constitution cleared the way for the new state to participate in the Revolution. Outmaneuvered by the canny New Englander, Philadelphians of all political stripes were faced with decision. Many of the Proprietary gentry turned to Loyalism, Dickinson being one exception. Franklin joined the Revolution, but his cohorts in colony politics, Galloway and Hughes, did not. Tilghman, who had taken a leading role opposing the Stamp Act, coined his former opponents as a Loyalist.

Alignment under the revolutionary banner was a most general rubric, however. The battle continued for leadership in the new state. Building on the broad base of Franklin's old party, the Constitutionalists (so named for having favored the 1776 Constitution) once again faced the members of the party dominated by the elite, the Anti-Constitutionalists, later called Republicans. As leader of the Anti-Constitutionalists, John Dickinson, with Bradford at his elbow, faced his familiar *bête noir*, Benjamin Franklin. While members of both parties united in the colonial struggle, partisan politics continued on the local level. As the Revolution commenced, the pages of the *Journal* were given over to the war against Great Britain and the fight against the new state constitution—an early "Double V" campaign.41 In the years from the Adams' Resolve to the invasion of Philadelphia in 1778, for example, not one essay in the *Journal* reflected any other view but an anti-Constitutional position. "Messrs. Bradfords," began one typical essay, "The resentment of the people of Pennsylvania is so great and so general against the new form of government framed by the late convention that the only question that now engages their attention is how they shall get rid of it."42 Another writer put the revolutionary rhetoric in a Pennsylvania context, "Slavery is a potion equally bitter, whether it come to us thro' the hands of Lord North, Lord Howe, or, My Lords, the members of the Convention."43

In 1778 Thomas took over the *Journal* from his father and retained its Anti-Constitutional, Republican outlook. (Bradford, in a story that remains to be

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40. The classic account is Thayer's *Pennsylvania Politics and the Growth of Democracy 1740-1776.*

41. David Hawke, *In the Midst of a Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961).

42. *Pennsylvania Journal,* 16 October 1776.

43. *Pennsylvania Journal,* 2 October 1776.

told fully, chose to align himself with the Anti-Constitutionalists after the occupation of Philadelphia.)44 Eventually the *Journal* was closed in favor of Thomas' new publication, the conservative *True American*. In the *Journal's* fading days as a party newspaper, a writer described the newspaper as "so tame, scrupulous, and modest" it was difficult to determine whether it was printed "in the royal or congressional territories."45

The sarcastic thrust appeared in what was a new Philadelphia newspaper, Francis Bailey's *Freedom's Journal*, established in April of 1781 to provide a voice for the Constitutionalist position. A year later its political antithesis appeared, Eleazer Oswald's *Independent Gazetteer; or, the Chronicle of Freedom.* As the election of 1782 approached, the depths of the imbroglio between the competitors looked back to the 1764 Assembly. Oswald had little in common with the cautions of prerevolutionary printers: Thomas McKean, the chief justice of Pennsylvania, was called a war profiteer and a stand-in for the devil; another member of the judiciary was "the excresence," and Constitutionalists in general were routinely "the skunk combination."46 But as Dwight Teeter points out, Oswald was not to be cowed even under the threat of charges of seditious libel.47

Meantime, Bailey's *Journal* pledged at its inception that access would be denied to no one, and nothing short of "torture" would "Extort" the names of his contributors. Like Franklin a half century before, Bailey promised his own version of impartiality. "I have always stood ready to publish also the vindication of the party injured by the false or malicious representation," claiming, in the kind of dramatic language that seldom flowed from the Franklin pen, that if he could not maintain the character of a free, safe, impartial, and upright printer," he would "perish in the attempt."48

Indeed, Bailey's "impartiality" went so far for him to relish reprinting attacks on his paper from the opposition organ. "'It is a disgrace to us, to have such a scandalous paper printed in this City,' " he reprinted in his own paper, " 'as is called the sink of scandal by some people, it has lately got the name Bailey's Chamber Pot.' " And if any of Bailey's readers had missed the original insertion, Bailey reprinted Oswald's metaphor that called the Constitutional cause as " 'black as your heart.' "49 To reprint the opposition was not so new,

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44. As chairman of the Constitutionalists, Bradford, in a signed front-page essay, issued a call for posse justice against those responsible for inflation and the deprecation of currency, that is, the merchants and elite leadership. *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 7 July 1779. Bradford's change of allegiance is not mentioned in the only published biography of Bradford, written by a nineteenth century descendant, John William Wallace, *The Patriot Printer of 1776, Sketches of His Life* (Philadelphia, 1864).

45. *Freeman's Journal,* 17 April 1782.

46. *Independent Gazetteer,* 5 October 1782; 7 December 1782; 28 September 1782.

47. Dwight L Teeter, "The Printer and the Chief Justice: Seditious Libel in 1782-83," *Journalism Quarterly* 45 (1968): 235-42.

48. *Freeman's Journal,* 27 March 1782.

49. *Freeman's Journal,* 11 December 1782; 26 March 1783.

however, and was not out of the spirit of impartiality. Bradford was first to publish *Cool Thoughts*, Franklin's criticism of the Paxton Boys, and later published Galloway's "Americanus" essay defending the Stamp Act.50 But in such a partisan environment, both served to infuriate rather than appease, as clearly was the intention of the use of the same technique in Bailey's paper.

The most important dialogue of the 1782 election, however, concerned John Dickinson, out of power but still a formidable leader. "Valernus" attacked Dickinson's lack of patriot fervor and leadership:

> He possesses boundless ambition, favoring too much of personal gratification, that he was an early and persevering enemy to independence of America—that he has neither firmness or decision of mind for trying occasions—that after sounding the trumpet to others, and engaging himself in civil and military offices, he shrunk from his duty and abandoned the cause.51

Oswald's paper in turn attacked Joseph Reed, the Constitutional leader, hinting at treason during the Battle of Trenton, charges sufficiently long lasting that a nineteenth century descendant felt it necessary to clear Reed's name.52 In the end, Oswald's innuendoes and Dickinson's lively and open defense and his still immense reputation combined to make the case effectively enough for the Republicans to retain power in the 1782 election. They would lose it in 1784 but then regain it by the decade's end. Once firmly in power, the conservatives brought their fifteen-year battle against the 1776 Constitution to a close, adopting a conservative document much like the national model without its Bill of Rights.53

Conclusion

Philadelphia's party press of the early 1780s looked both ways — back to the political traditions of the past and forward to characteristics that would be the hallmarks of the later press. While personal invective was nothing new for the Philadelphia press of the 1780s, what was new in the 1780s was its appearance in newspapers rather than the anonymous pamphlets of the 1760s and that the invective was clearly the expression of its editors as well as its contributors. The newspapers of the 1780s, however, mirrored a city that had not existed twenty years before. Among the emerging characteristics of the society of the 1780s was the demarcation of political lines, not surprising for a city that was less fluid than any period in its history. In this city of hard lines,

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50. *Pennsylvania Journal,* 26 April 1764; 29 August 1765.
51. *Freeman's Journal,* 6 November 1782.
52. William B. Reed, *Life of Joseph Reed* (Philadelphia: n.p. 1846).
53. Robert L Brunhouse, *The Counter-Revolution in Pennsylvania 1776-1790* (New York: Octagon Books, 1971).

the ambitious young artisan not only would not be "treated," he would not even be in the same tavern as his betters. The City Tavern, modeled on the elite clubs of London,54 replaced Bradford's Old London Coffee House in order that the well-to-do could avoid contact entirely with their lessers.55 Taverns in general became class bound, as did residential neighborhoods, and less opportunity existed to greet, much less know, other city residents who were not of one's own class.

The increasing isolation promoted by recreational and housing patterns were reinforced by employment. As the paternalistic system of apprenticeships eroded, wage earners tended to organize by craft and built horizontal loyalties. The incorporation of the Bank of North America in 1781 gathered the conservatives into a powerful financial institution. And exacerbating all these shifts away from the deference of the colonial city was inflation. Coming on the heels of the British occupation of Philadelphia, inflation, and its handmaiden "forestalling" — holding back on the sale of goods until the prices increase — were blamed on the well-to-do.56 Although John Dunlap's *Pennsylvania Packet*57 urged caution, cautions were insufficient constraints; and mobs, which had been utilized so effectively in the prerevolutionary era, eschewed further leadership from above (as much as the elite distrusted the ferment below) to take independent actions. Indicative of the distrust on both sides was the street battle known as the "Fort Wilson" riot in which the city's militia and the friends of attorney James Wilson found themselves in hand-to-hand combat on the stairs of Wilson's Philadelphia home that resulted in several deaths.58

The riot was one expression of a new culture of antagonism and grievance replacing the flexibility and fluidity of Philadelphia's earlier years. Taking the place of the permeable standards and private positions that had been so useful in Philadelphia's entrepreneurial history were the absolutes and public stances that necessarily accompany antagonism and grievance. The stand-up-and-be-counted mentality was reflected in the city's institutions — housing, taverns, churches and newspapers — that were increasingly homogenous representations of their residents, customers, congregants, and readers. Neighborhoods, such as the Chestnut Ward, which had included artisans as well as wealthy merchants,59 lost integration as the faces of the neighborhoods and homes were expected to be clear proclamations of the lives within.

Philadelphia newspapers, despite their tradition of political identity, were not exempt from this requirement of public declamation. Common

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54. John D. Platt, *The City Tavern* (Denver: Denver Service Center, Historic Preservation Team, 1973), 9.
55. Thompson, *passim.*
56. *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 16 May 1778; 2 June 1778.
57. *Pennsylvania Packet,* 23 July 1779.
58. John K. Alexander, "The Fort Wilson Incident of 1779: A Case Study of the Revolutionary Crowd," WMQ 31 (1974): 589-612.
59. Hannah Benner Roach, "Taxables in Chestnut and Middle Wards, Philadelphia, 1754," *Pennsylvania Genealogical Magazine* 21 (1959): 159-196.

understandings of political connections were not enough. Public discourse had less patience for reading between the lines or for the protective strategies that Franklin and Bradford had practiced. Outrageous comment thus moved from the private environment of the pamphlet to the public stage of the newspaper. For, although Bailey and Oswald still practiced a traditional craft, they were now editors, connecting themselves to the editorial contents of their newspapers, as if their newspapers were as much an expression of who they were as a house facade expressed the truth of whomever was behind the door or the clothes indicated the man. Unlike Franklin, there could be no difference between private faces and public balls in the late revolutionary world. As Bradford wrote, "We are now at a point where nothing can hurt us but want of honesty, and in which to be rich or be poor depends on our own choice and consent."60 The political newspapers of the 1780s further eroded a city sensibility that had once thrived on benevolent self-interest in favor of a simplified agenda, permanent commitment, and perpetual antagonism.

Thus, when the national press took center stage in the Philadelphia of the 1790s, it came to a city that had had a political press in place for more than fifty years. The revolutionary decade had further enriched a history of a city and its press, bringing to the traditions of the political press the demands for openness of the new nation. The lively and libertarian press of the 1790s was no overnight sensation, but was rooted in the colonial and revolutionary experiences of its city.

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60. *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 7 July 1779.

News: Public Service or Profitable Property?

By Barbara Cloud

Examination of an effort in 1884 to gain copyright for news illustrates not only the growth in the late-nineteenth century of the notion of news as property, but also the increasing tension between journalism as a public service and a profit-making industry. Evidence identifies a shift in values favoring the industry perspective.

Nineteenth-century American editors often bragged that they were as skilled with scissors as with pen. Scissors provided the key to the exchanges, the newspapers and magazines that editors sent one another and that served as news distribution channels in the far-flung parts of the nation until the telegraph became economical enough for general use. In an era with limited channels for the delivery of news, few editors objected when a colleague across the state or nation reprinted an article from another's newspaper. The success of the "booster" press was predicated on this practice, a booster editor hoping that articles favorable to his town would be republished for receptive audiences elsewhere.[1]

The exchange system worked well so long as competition for readers was minimal, but as journalism became more commercial and news a "product," the "scoop" and exclusive rights to news became weapons in the battle for subscribers and street sales.[2] The increasing value of news led publishers to establish extensive networks for newsgathering and to help develop telegraph services. Quite naturally, publishers expected their investments in newsgathering

1. See Daniel Boorstin, *The Americans: The National Experience* (New York: Random House, 1965), 124-134.
2. See Gerald J. Baldasty, *The Commercialization of News in the Nineteenth Century* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992).

to accrue to their benefit, and they were alarmed when they saw their endeavors aiding their competitors. This article examines an attempt by publishers to protect their investment in newsgathering by attaining exclusive rights to news stories, at least for a temporary period. Members of the Associated Press decided copyright was the best vehicle to insure their interests and in 1884 asked Congress to pass an act giving newspapers temporary copyright of the news. The particular effort was half-hearted but the episode illustrates the development of attitudes toward the notion of news as property, notions which undoubtedly contributed to newspapers' inclusion in the Copyright Law of 1909[3] and to the Supreme Court's decision in *INS v. AP* in 1918 extending the principle of fair competition to cover systematic pirating of information.[4]

Exchanging News

Until about 1900 — sometimes even later — most newspapers were peppered with items, often taken verbatim, from other publications. An editor was considered clever and able if he knew what to clip from the exchanges that would best inform and amuse his readers, much as later editors culled the wire services for items of interest. For the editor in distant communities, a stash of clippings also provided security against days when he had no time to seek fresh news or when more recent copies of newspapers failed to arrive.[5]

Even Congress recognized the importance of the exchanges to the nation's ability to inform itself and early on allowed them to be carried postage free between one newspaper office and another.[6] In addition, apparently accepting the notion that news belonged in the public domain and should freely circulate, Congress did not include newspapers in the early copyright acts, which meant that newspapers had no recourse against copiers even if they objected to the practice as, when news became an increasingly valuable commodity, they started to do.[7]

Few, if any, city newspapers felt threatened when country weeklies copied their stories, but in the larger towns and cities, where several papers vied for readers' attention, complaints were heard and questions arose about rights to

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3. 35 Stat. 1075. Copyright was extended to "periodicals, including newspapers" (1076).

4. 248 U.S. 215 (1918).

5. See, for example, Barbara Cloud, *The Business of Newspapers on the Western Frontier* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1992), 122-124; Alfred McClung Lee, *The Daily Newspaper in America* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), 577-578.

6. For a discussion of the postal laws and newspaper exchanges, see Richard B. Kielbowicz, *News in the Mail: The Press, Post Office, and Public Information, 1700-1860s* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1989).

7. Although newspapers had no statutory copyright protection, they might have found recourse in the common law had they sought it. However, the practice of lifting from exchanges was well accepted as a kind of "fair use." For a discussion of the history of fair use — which makes no mention of news — see L. Ray Patterson, "Understanding Fair Use," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 55 (spring 1992): 249.

use other newspapers' stories. In centers like New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago, and San Francisco, being first with the news — or at least appearing to the reading public to be first — could make a significant difference in street sales, and the timing of street editions became an art. If a newspaper rushed an edition onto the streets too early, a competitor might be able to copy the stories and publish its own paper in time to draw sales away from the first newspaper. Morning newspapers had the greatest advantage in the race to copy because they could often wait out their immediate competition but could publish well before the evening dailies geared up for publication.

Stealing the News

Even experienced publishers sometimes fell prey to what might be considered industrial espionage. In 1854 editors of James Gordon Bennett's *New York Herald* thought they had guaranteed themselves an exclusive story, but an alert and aggressive *New York Times* editor was their undoing. The conflict developed when a passenger steamer on its way to New York collided with another vessel in the coastal fog. According to *Times* lore, the *Times* city editor was aboard a trolley on his way home, having given up on getting details of the story, when he overheard a comment that the *Herald* had located a survivor and had beaten the other papers to an interview. The *Herald* had delayed its morning edition to ensure that no one else got the information in time to make competitive use of it. The *Times* man returned to his office, rousted the printers, and sent one of them to the *Herald* office where he somehow managed to get a copy of the story. A short time later, before the *Herald* was on the streets, *Times* customers were reading what the survivor told the *Herald*.[8]

Times editors gloated over their "enterprise" journalism, while *Herald* editors chafed in indignation. Similarly, in his 1873 history of American journalism, Frederic Hudson, the former managing editor of the *Herald*, recalled that during the Mexican War, the *Herald* and several other New York newspapers had their battle reports stolen regularly by a New York paper that "unblushingly called the act 'ingenuity.' "[9] Clearly the ethics of stealing news depended on who was benefitting.

Impact of the Telegraph

The wiring of the nation for the telegraph heightened competition and increased problems for newspapers that could afford the new service. It became common practice for newspapers that did not subscribe to a telegraph news service to wait until one that did subscribe published an edition. The interloper then quickly set the stories in type and rushed its own edition to the streets. Poorer papers became skilled at getting their newspapers to the public soon

8. Meyer Berger, *The Story of the New York Times, 1851-1951* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1951), 18-20.

9. Frederic Hudson, *Journalism in the United States* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1873; Scholarly Press reprint, 1968), 724.

enough to claim a share of the market. For example, in the 1860s when influence with telegraph companies gave the San Francisco *Bulletin* and the Sacramento *Union* a monopoly on telegraph news from the East Coast to their cities, the *Alta California* resorted to waiting for the *Union* to publish and then used local telegraph lines to wire the stories to San Francisco. The *Alta* eventually was allowed to join the news monopoly, but other San Francisco newspapers, excluded from the consortium, continued the practice.[10]

Other city newspapers were similarly afflicted. By the 1880s, metropolitan publishers decided they needed to protect themselves. The resulting attempt to get legislation seems luke-warm, at best, perhaps because it quickly became clear that the battle — if there was going to be one — would be between what were perceived as big, bad monopolistic city newspapers and honest, hard-working country publishers, reflecting the urban-rural conflict ever-present in U.S. society. In hindsight, Henry Watterson, editor of the Louisville *Courier-Journal* and the person charged with taking the issue to Congress, even called the effort a "fool's errand."[11]

Watterson's errand was instigated by the Associated Press, whose members were increasingly concerned that their markets were being eroded not only by nonmember newspapers who stole their stories, but also by other news associations who engaged in the same practices. Wealthy publishers, defined for this article as those who could afford to take advantage of telegraph services, searched for a solution to news "theft" for some time. Watterson's own newspaper reported that the bill eventually set before Congress resulted from determination to stop the "systematic stealing from the New York papers for several years past."[12] The *Courier-Journal* also estimated that one-half of the news distributed by other news associations had been stolen from the AP: "They watch the presses of their rivals in the East, steal early copies and thus make up their matter."[13] The newspaper complained that the associations used other stories from AP members, as well, and that "[t]o publish this as its own news and specials is to obtain money under false pretenses."

Copyright as a Solution

Members of the Associated Press chose to approach the problem via copyright law. Historically, it had been taken for granted that news was in the public domain; even today copyright histories take a similar view and pay little attention to the question.[14] In consequence, newspapers were not mentioned in

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10. Robert J. Chandler, "The California News-Telegraph Monopoly, 1860-1870," *Southern California Quarterly* 58 (winter 1976): 459-484.
11. Henry Watterson, *Marse Henry: An Autobiography* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1919), 104.
12. *Louisville Courier-Journal,* 3 March 1884.
13. *Louisville Courier-Journal,* 6 March 1884.
14. See for example, L. Ray Patterson, *Copyright in Historical Perspective* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968); Patterson and Stanley W. Lindberg, *The Nature of Copyright: A Law of User's Rights* (Athens: University of

the copyright laws, so it was assumed that they had little or no protection, even against direct copying. Nevertheless, after a major revision of the copyright law in 1870, some weekly newspaper publishers began registering their publications with the Copyright Office.[15] Thus there was some precedent when, in 1884, publishers turned to Congress for help. In all, four bills relating to news copyright were introduced during the First Session of the 48th Congress. The first, H.R. 62, introduced by William Starke Rosencrans, a California Democrat, was described as giving copyright to journalistic articles "under certain conditions."[16] Rosencrans' bill and one introduced by Abram S. Hewitt of New York, H.R. 4160, to copyright newspaper titles, disappeared into committees.[17] Most of the attention — what little there was — focused on the bills urged by Watterson: Senate Bill 1728 "giving copyright to newspapers," and its companion, H.R. 5850.

On 4 March, 1884, Senator John Sherman, an Ohio Republican, introduced Senate Bill 1728 which was read twice by its title and referred to the Committee on the Library.[18] On 10 March, Representative John Randolph Tucker, Democrat of Virginia, introduced the bill in the House of Representatives, where it was referred to the Judiciary Committee.[19] Specifically, the bill gave a newspaper "sole right to print, issue and sell for term of eight hours, dating from the hour of going to press," the stories in the newspaper that exceeded 100 words. The bill allowed an injured party to sue for damages.[20]

Georgia Press, 1991); or Bruce W. Bugbee, *Genesis of American Patent and Copyright Law* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1967).

15. *New York Times*, 20 November 1870, 1.

16. Congress, House, 48th Cong. 1st sess., *Congressional Record*, 10 December 1883, vol. 15, 60. The bill allowed a periodical writer to copyright already published work after giving notice six times in publications.

17. Congress, House, 48th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record*, 29 January 1884, vol. 15, 734. Hewitt's bill was discussed by the *New York Times*, which said it assumed the bill was designed to protect newspaper stories, rather than titles or names. *New York Times*, 3 February 1884.

18. Congress, Senate, 48th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record*, 4 March 1884, vol. 15, 1578.

19. Congress, House, 48th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record*, 10 March 1884, vol. 15, 1758.

20. Congress, Senate, 48th Cong., 1st sess., Senate Bill 1748. The full text of the bill is as follows:

> A bill Giving copyright to newspapers. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that any daily or weekly newspaper, or any association of daily and weekly newspapers, published in the United States or any of the Territories thereof, shall have the sole right to print, issue, and sell, for the term of eight hours, dating from the hour of going to press, the contents

The official records show no discussion of the bill, but news reports suggest the eight-hour limit may have been a compromise reached before the measure was formally introduced. Prior to the introduction of the bill, the *New York Times* reported that Hewitt's bill provided for twenty-four-hour copyright,[21] and in an interview Watterson referred to the longer period.[22] Similarly, an article on the West Coast, published even before Watterson's *New York Times* interview, referred to twenty-four hours.[23] By the time Watterson's *Courier-Journal* discussed the bill on 6 March, however, two days after its introduction in the Senate, the term had been reduced to eight hours. At what point the change was made is unclear, but it probably came in response to what Watterson called "considerable misinformation" about the proposal.[24]

Issues of Concern

The "misinformation" Watterson subsequently sought to correct included at least two related areas of concern. One was that the bill was for the sole benefit of the Associated Press, the other that the country weeklies would be harmed. The discussion that ensued in the press and via communications with Congress developed a number of arguments in relation to these and other issues, and revealed how far the city press, at least, had come in thinking of news as a product from which profit could be made. It also illustrated concerns about monopoly, concerns that reflected not only the business thinking of the time but also on-going tension in the history of copyright between giving the creator a monopoly to profit from a creation and the benefit the public receives from having access to the creation.

In the interview about the bill, Watterson assured the *New York Times* that the bill was not designed "for the relief of the Associated Press. All honest newspapers and all honest news associations are interested in its passage."[25] Watterson was being somewhat disingenuous in his denial that the Associated Press was intended as the main beneficiary. To the *Times* Watterson defined copyrightable news as "original, special, and general matter exceeding 100 words *sent by post or by wire*" (emphasis added). Even though the bill itself covered

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> of said daily or weekly newspaper, or the collected news of said newspaper association, exceeding one hundred words.
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> Sect. 2. That for any infringement of the copyright granted by the first section of this act the party injured may sue in a court of competent jurisdiction and recover in any proper action the damages sustained by him from the person making such infringement, together with the costs of the suit.

21. *New York Times,* 3 February 1884.
22. *New York Times*, 18 February 1884.
23. *Portland Oregonian*, 11 February 1884. See also, *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 3 March 1884.
24. *New York Times*, 18 February 1884.
25. Ibid.

all contents of a newspaper or news association exceeding 100 words, at least one newspaper concurred with Watterson's definition that the interest centered on stories by post or wire. When the *Willamette Farmer* asked why the *Oregonian* apparently was not concerned about copyrighting its local news, the *Oregonian* stressed the effort put into gathering news sent by telegraph and paid for by recipient newspapers.[26]

Watterson insisted that the proposed law would not change accepted practice of copying from one paper by another; it would simply slow it down. The *Courier-Journal* said that the rural press was free to continue copying "anything that pleases them," after 7 a.m.[27] Other newspapers also emphasized protection for the weeklies. The *Chicago Daily News* said they "need not be afraid,"[28] and the *Oregonian* pointed out that rural papers generally do not receive the city papers in time to use their stories within the proposed copyright time limit.[29]

Attacks on Piracy

Advocates of news copyright did not limit themselves to denials regarding the Associated Press or soothing reassurances to weekly editors. Indeed, they took the offensive against "a class of newspapers unable by fair and open methods to hold their own in competition with journals of enterprise and honesty."[30] They called the practices of their competitors "piracy," argued that news was the only "product" not secured against theft, compared newspaper news to history books, and insisted their time, money, and effort should be rewarded with protection.

Watterson established the parameters of the advocates' arguments in his interview with the *Times*. Commenting on piracy, he said that "all honest news associations are interested" in the bill's passage because it protected their property in news "from piratical concurrent publication."[31] Other editors agreed that they were "absolutely at the mercy of anyone unscrupulous enough to steal" the news and that copyright protection against news pirates was a "just and proper thing."[32] One editor referred to a "species of evanescent little sheet that steals its news."[33]

Watterson went to the heart of the issue when he noted that items in a newspaper office such as the press and the paste pot were protected by laws concerning theft, "but that which constitutes the real value of a newspaper property — its news franchises, costing vast sums of money and years of special

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26. *Portland Oregonian,* 18 February 1884.
27. *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 3 and 6 March 1884.
28. *Chicago Daily News*, 3 March 1884.
29. *Portland Oregonian,* 25 February 1884.
30. *Louisville Courier-Journal,* 6 March 1884.
31. *New York Times,* 18 February 1884.
32. *Chicago Daily News,* 3 March 1884; *Portland Oregonian,* 11 February 1884.
33. *Chicago Daily News*, 3 March 1884.

enterprise, training, and labor — has no legal status whatever."[34] Echoed the *Chicago Daily News*, "The daily newspaper is the only commercial enterprise in the United States to steal from which is not a crime,"[35] and the *Oregonian* noted that a patent could be obtained for "the most trifling article, such as a mouse trap or a fastener for a suspender," but a newspaper could not protect its investment of "tens of thousands of dollars" in news.[36]

Copyright proponents compared their newspapers with history books, pointing out that the latter could be copyrighted. "Under existing laws," said Watterson, "I can make a compilation of telegraphic news matter, and issuing this in a book may copyright it."[37] Another writer was more specific:

> What is Bancroft's history of the United States? Like a newspaper, it is a collection of matter from public sources and a product of individual and associated labor under one directing mind. Bancroft can protect his property by copyright; why should not the newspaper be permitted to do the same?[38]

On another occasion, the same editor noted, "Bancroft gets a copyright for his narration of the battle of Lexington. Why should not a newspaper have a copyright for its account of an important event?"[39]

Version or Facts?

The comparison with history books highlighted the confusion on what the bill would or would not allow. To objections that news copyright would prevent readers from passing their newspapers along to friends or telling them about its contents, some proponents noted that, as with history books, only the *version* of the news would receive protection.[40] News thieves could use the ideas and facts, as long as they rewrote them.[41] Watterson argued that the "news thieves" would not be able to rewrite the stories soon enough to do them any good. "Under this law they could use the ideas and facts no doubt in a new form," he wrote, "but it would compel a delay which would be fatal."[42] The trade magazine, *The Journalist*, suggested that any journalist worth his salt was up to the challenge. *The Journalist* said Watterson's claim was "sheer nonsense" and that any editor could rephrase a hundred words quickly enough. Besides, said

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34. *New York Times,* 18 February 1884.
35. *Chicago Daily News,* 3 March 1884.
36. *Portland Oregonian,* 11 February 1884.
37. *New York Times*, 18 February 1884.
38. *Portland Oregonian,* 13 February 1884.
39. *Portland Oregonian,* 15 February 1884.
40. See, for example, the *Portland Oregonian* responding to comments from the *Portland Standard. Oregonian,* 15 February 1884.
41. *Louisville Courier-Journal,* 6 March 1884.
42. *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 6 March 1884.

the magazine, the facts, not the words, were important. It called Watterson's idea "utopian," and of no practical value.[43]

But many proponents recognized that the writing of the story is a relatively small part of the newsgathering process. The "vast sums" and labor that Watterson argued needed protection also cover the gathering of the news, telegraphing it, and printing and distributing the newspaper, and even though Watterson claimed to be protecting only the version, clearly publishers' investment in newsgathering and distribution was their primary concern. After noting that the commercial value of trademarks and books is protected, the *Courier-Journal* commented, "It is difficult to see, therefore, why the same legal protection may not be given to a man who, at much risk to himself, gathers news, or to an association which, at much expense, secures special information." The *Oregonian*, too, emphasized the collection of "facts and incidents at expense of time, labor and money."[44]

In 1879, James W. Simonton, general agent for the Associated Press, said, "I claim that there is a property in news, and that property is created by the fact of our collecting it and concentrating it."[45] This notion of news as property and the question of fairness to owners of this property pervaded the copyright discussions. Comments refer to "property in news,"[46] "product of skilled labor and outlay,"[47] and "our own property."[48]

The *New York Times*, although observing that "news once printed is abandoned by the original publisher, who has already made his profit from it, to whoever may choose to reproduce it," nevertheless also argued for news-as-property with an owner's right.[49]

Watterson initially expressed optimism about prospects for the measure's passage. He said that he could find no constitutional objection to it and that Congressmen were interested and disposed to be friendly, although he admitted that he had to clear up "hazy prejudices" that some members held about the Associated Press.[50] In his memoir he recalled that his lobbying efforts had seemed successful; he claimed to have the support of the Joint Library Committee to which the bill had been referred: "Yet somehow the measure lagged."[51]

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43. *The Journalist*, 22 March 1884.
44. *Portland Oregonian,* 25 February 1884.
45. Quoted in Daniel J. Czitrom, *Media and the American Mind: From Morse to McLuhan* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 26.
46. *New York Times,* 18 February 1884.
47. *New York Tribune,* quoted in *The Nation* 38 (21 February 1884): 159.
48. *Louisville Courier-Journal,* 3 March 1884.
49. *New York Times,* 2 February 1884.
50. *New York Times*, 18 February 1884. This may be reflected, in part, in a debate in the House a few days later about the dangers of giving Western Union and the Associated Press a monopoly over news transmission lines. Congress, House, 48th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record,* 1 March 1884, vol. 15, 1543.
51. Watterson, *Marse Henry,* 104.

Weekly Press Organizes Opposition

However much individual congressmen may have sympathized with the property rationale, clearly one reason the bill stalled was the opposition marshaled by the weekly press. Weekly publishers had little faith in the dailies' reassurance that they would not be affected by the bill. Pockets of organized opposition resulted in petitions and letters to Congress. The weeklies, too, used the language of property in many of their statements. "We had supposed that when once made public all news was common property," commented the *Willamette Farmer* in Oregon.[52] Members of the Southern Illinois Press Association, meeting at Belleville, Illinois, opposed "efforts now being made by certain metropolitan newspapers to secure a copyright law which gives them a property interest in news matter."[53]

The campaign against the bill was led by small-newspaper publishers in the northern tier of states from New England to the Mississippi Valley, probably because their organizations were better developed than those in other parts of the nation. Through the month of April 1884, while the bill rested in committee, publishers dispatched petitions to their representatives, urging rejection of the proposal which would "prove very disastrous to all the country press."[54]

The letters and printed petitions sent to Congress frequently accused the daily press of attempting to monopolize news. The proprietor of the *Buchanan County Bulletin*, in Independence, Iowa, called the copyright bill a "distasteful manifestation of that tendency to oppressive monopoly that is growing in this country."[55] And twenty-eight Missouri residents wrote Rep. Charles Henry Morgan, a Missouri Democrat, "We believe this to be a move in the interest of the large dailies to crush out their smaller competitors, thus giving them a monopoly of the business of furnishing news to the people. We believe in a Free Press and we are decidedly opposed to any such law."[56]

The arguments put forward by weekly newspapers found support in the *Nation* which could find little "original intellectual effort," indeed "very little effort of any kind," in the collection of news, certainly not enough to warrant copyright protection:

> Some people do it [collect news] by listening at keyholes, most people in the ordinary course of conversation with the

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52. Quoted in the *Portland Oregonian,* 18 February 1884.
53. Congress, Senate, Resolution from Southern Illinois Press Association, n.d., Record Group 46, Box 106, Senate Records, 48th Congress, National Archives.
54. James O. Amos, proprietor of the *Shelby County Democrat,* Sidney, Ohio, to Sen. John Sherman, 9 April 1884, Record Group 46, Box 81, Senate Records, 48th Congress, National Archives.
55. Wm. Toman and Sons, 20 February 1884. House of Representatives, 48th Congress, 1st Sess., Record Group 233, Box 167, National Archives.
56. Petition from Liberal, Missouri, to C.H. Morgan, Judiciary Committee, 18 February 1884. House of Representatives, 48th Congress, 1st Sess., Record Group 233, Box 157, National Archives.

> persons whom they meet in the way of business or pleasure. If a collector of news in London telegraphs to New York that Sir Stafford Northcote has just delivered a lecture on "Nothing" or that Lord Cairns has offered Miss Fortescue £10,000 to release his son from his marriage engagement, who is the person whose "property" in the news ought to be protected, or who is the "author" of it?[57]

A New Property Right?

To the *New York Times*, Watterson admitted that copyright for news would create a new property right. This suggests that he believed the bill protected not only the way the information was presented but also the information itself. If only the form was protected under the law, then it could be seen as an extension of existing law, but if the facts themselves were at issue, then it would indeed be a new property right.

The "question is a novel one," he said, "and embraces the whole principle of modern journalism." Noting the changes produced by the telegraph and railroads, he said,

> That which we call 'news' is a modern invention, as much as gutta percha or the reaping-machine.[58] It demands the very best and rarest of skilled labor. It involves forecast, organization, and outlay. It is an intellectual and material product. Why has it not the same right to legal recognition and protection as other classes of property?[59]

A petition from Illinois attempted to answer this argument, emphasizing that the purpose of copyright was to "*stimulate creative talent*," but that the gathering of news required no such stimulation. "The rewards of judicious expenditure in the collection of news are ample," the petition said, "and the strong newspapers which are the champions of the news copyright bill are among the most prosperous business enterprises in the country."[60] The petition called the proposal "contrary to common sense, to justice, and to the Constitution."

The editor of a New York country newspaper echoed this understanding of the purpose of copyright when he wrote that the bill benefitted only the big

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57. "Stealing News," *Nation* 38, 21 February 1884, 159.

58. Gutta percha is a sap from Malaysian sapodilla trees that produces a tough, rubberlike gum that is now used as an industrial cement and in such things as golf balls and electric wire insulation.

59. *New York Times,* 18 February 1884.

60. "The News Copyright Bill," petition signed by the publisher of the *Gazette* in Champaign, Illinois. Senate Records, 48th Congress, Record Group 46, Box 106, National Archives.

dailies "who least of all need any protection as a stimulation to creative talent, which is the purpose of a patent."[61]

Challenging Tradition

Clearly Watterson and his colleagues were challenging the traditional rationale for copyright. In so doing they also highlighted the difficulty of applying copyright to the product of a newspaper.

The concept of copyright developed in England in the early sixteenth century as an author's right, but it came into conflict with the existing printing patent or printer's right.[62] When the framers of the U.S. Constitution incorporated the copyright clause into the document, they went a step farther and couched it in terms of a public right: "To promote the progress of science and useful arts."[63] The record lacks a definition of "useful arts," but when the Constitution was ratified, twelve of the thirteen states had their own copyright laws, most of which had as their stated objective to encourage learning and, particularly, literature.[64] This language was included in subsequent federal legislation as Congress endorsed the argument that protection for literary creations would help the new nation take its place in world culture. At the same time, the framers believed that giving authors property rights to their creations would contribute to a social system based on merit, not on inheritance, in keeping with the republican ideal.[65]

The first U.S. copyright act, in 1790, provided for the right to print, reprint, publish, and sell maps, charts, and books for a period of fourteen years.[66] Congress amended the law in 1802 by adding prints to the list,[67] and in 1831 musical compositions.[68] A major revision in 1870 consolidated patents and copyright under one act, gave responsibility for copyright to the Library of Congress, and acknowledged changing technologies by making it possible to copyright photographs and photographic negatives.[69] The 1831 amendment also lengthened the duration of copyright, extending the initial copyright period to twenty-eight years, renewable for another fourteen, a provision retained in 1870.

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61. Edgar L. Vincent to E. G. Lafleur, 4 April 1884, Senate Records, 48th Congress, Record Group 46, Box 81, National Archives.
62. L. Ray Patterson, *Copyright in Historical Perspective* (Nashville, Tenn,: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), 42, 78.
63. U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 8, Powers of Congress, 8.
64. Irah Donner, "The Copyright Clause of the U.S. Constitution: Why Did the Framers Include It With Unanimous Approval?" *American Journal of Legal History* 36 (1992): 361, 369.
65. Donner, Ibid., 375-376.
66. Copyright Act of 1790, 1 Stat. 124.
67. Copyright Act of 1802, 2 Stat. 171.
68. Copyright Act of 1831, 4 Stat. 436. Eventually, in the Copyright Act of 1909, Congress added periodicals, including newspapers, but not news (35 Stat. 1075).
69. 16 Stat. 212.

In any case, the acts granted a limited monopoly ostensibly for the benefit of both society and author. Society surely benefits to the extent that copyright successfully encourages creation, but as Ronald Bettig has pointed out, while a creator may also benefit from copyright, the person or entity that usually stands to gain the most is the one who takes economic risks, not creative risks.[70] Because most news stories were "created" by individuals who had little at stake economically, at least in comparison to their publishers, a limited monopoly would offer little advantage to the creator; at the same time, a limited monopoly could stem the free flow of information and thus disadvantage society. But the publisher who had built an elaborate apparatus for collecting news would reap rewards.

Even granting that a talented writer lends a creative gloss to a news story, the newspaper as a whole relies on the collection of a great many news items for its profit, not on creativity as it is usually applied to literature and other arts. In addition, the creator of literature received protection for the form of the creation but not the ideas or information inherent in it; publishers were asking Congress to give them rights — however limited — to ideas and information.

Economic Risks at Stake

Certainly, economic, not creative, risks were on newspaper publishers' minds in 1884. An industry in the throes of what Gerald Baldasty has labeled the "commercialization of news"[71] experienced technological improvements in newsgathering and distribution that both facilitated news monopoly and threatened it. No longer could aggressive publishers be as sanguine as Horace Greeley of the *New York Tribune* who did not worry about others stealing his stories because "those who take the news after we issue it cannot have it in time to deliver to a very large number in a suitable morning season, and we regard it as of no consequence."[72] Or as the *Herald's* Hudson who, although he deplored the theft of news in an earlier era, in 1873 would write, "Newspapers, it would seem, hardly need to be copyrighted. With a daily circulation of one hundred thousand, it is fair to suppose that that would practically be a copyright."[73]

Hudson, who devoted a five-page chapter to news copyright in his history, concluded that newspapers "must continue to find their copyright in their superior enterprise, their superior machinery, their superior circulation, and in their superior means of delivering their papers to the public."[74]

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70. Ronald V. Bettig, "Critical Perspectives on the History and Philosophy of Copyright," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 9 (1992): 149.
71. See Baldasty, *The Commercialization of News.*
72. Horace Greeley in British Parliamentary *Reports from Committees, Session 4 February-8 August 1851*, XVII, 394, 393, quoted in Lee, *The Daily Newspaper in America*, 553.
73. Hudson, *Journalism in the United States,* 724.
74. Ibid.

But that superiority was exactly what Watterson and the Associated Press were trying to protect in an ever-more competitive world.

The Bill Fails

On 18 April, Senator Sherman, chair of the Library Committee, reported the bill to the Senate adversely and without comment.[75] In its summary of the session's activities, the *New York Times* noted that no reasons were given. Members of Congress had evidenced little interest in the measure and, accordingly, put little on record as to why they rejected it. Nevertheless, we can consider a number of possible explanations for their lack of action.

Undoubtedly, some Congressmen responded to higher concerns about what they viewed as the public good; Lyman Ray Patterson suggests that legislators place public welfare ahead of individual creators' rights when it comes to copyright,[76] and some must have hesitated about establishing a new property right that might affect the public's ability to get news. Still others may have had a sincere concern for the welfare of the country press and believed that it was threatened.

One might also look beyond the problem of a new property right or economics to politics for another reason the bill failed. A New York publisher spelled it out plainly for his Representative. Warning that the bill's passage would "cripple *every single one of our journals* and destroy many of them," he reminded Congressmen that the country newspaper played an important role in the political process. It was, he argued, "nearer the people than any metropolitan daily can ever be," and to damage it would destroy "one of the strongest pillars of the party edifice."[77]

For Congressmen who relied on that pillar for support, the outpouring of petitions and letters from people who could have a substantial impact in the next election must have created concern. While the city press was busy being profitable, much of the country press remained close to grassroots politics. This no doubt colored the thinking of members of Congress as they listened to Watterson's arguments and read the petitions. Even though in practice the bill would probably have had little or no effect on the country press, the fact that country editors claimed it would carried great weight. The symbiotic relationship between a Congressman and his local editor was to be nurtured, not undermined.

Undoubtedly, Congressmen also sensed that anything that appeared to side with the wire services and Western Union was politically unwise and unlikely to raise them in the esteem of their constituents. The same session of

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75. Congress, Senate, Senator Sherman reporting on S. 1728, 48th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record,* 18 April 1884, 3077.
76. L. Ray Patterson, "Understanding Fair Use," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 55 (Spring 1992): 249.
77. Edgar L. Vincent to E.G. Lafleur, 4 April 1884.

Congress saw House members excoriating the "censorship" they claimed the news and telegraph services practiced to the detriment of informing the public.[78]

After 1884, the issue and an attempt in 1899 to gain some copyright for newspapers attracted even less attention than the 1884 effort.[79] But publishers did not give up. In 1903 members of the Maine Bar Association were told that "There would seem to be no reason why copyright should not be secured on newspapers . . . and the protection ought to be temporarily extended beyond the mere language in which the news is stated."[80] Finally, in 1909, newspapers were brought under copyright, at least in terms of language, and subsequent legal cases, such as *International News Service v. Associated Press*,[81] gave some protection for newsgathering as well.

Conclusion

Eventually then, publishers got much of the protection they wanted for their investment. While they never obtained the monopoly — however temporary — that they sought in 1884, their efforts illustrated the changing emphasis in the newspaper industry from providing news and information to selling a product. Baldasty points to changes in news content to support his contention that in the late nineteenth-century newspapers "elevated private commercial gain over broad public service,"[82] and the attempt to monopolize news through copyright was one more piece of evidence that values were changing.

In their arguments for property rights in news, the publishers were — and remain — at odds with Congress. Congress' rejection in 1884 of the publishers' appeal fit squarely in the mainstream of nineteenth-century thinking about copyright: both courts and Congress accepted the idea that the purpose of copyright was to further the common good by advancing knowledge. Copyright was not a "natural right" of the author, but a limited monopoly granted by statute as an incentive to people with ideas to make them available to the public.[83] Repeatedly in legislation — including the most recent major revision of copyright law in 1976 — Congress reaffirmed its adherence to this principle. In the meantime, however, the courts have shifted position from their nineteenth-century interpretation of copyright that put society at the center to a

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78. See Congress, House, 48th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* (1 March 1884), vol. 15, 1543.

79. Lee, in *The Daily Newspaper in America,* remarks that the American Newspaper Publishers Association was interested in copyright in 1890, and refers to a committee formed in 1899 by the Associated Press to deal with copyright. However, I can find no record of a bill to protect news being introduced.

80. Samuel J. Elder, address to the Maine Bar Association, 11 February 1903, *American Law Review* 37 (March-April 1903): 221.

81. 248 U.S. 215 (1918).

82. Baldasty, 143.

83. Patterson and Lindberg, 2, 12.

twentieth-century acceptance of the kind of property argument advanced by Watterson and his friends.[84]

Certainly making a profit from one's business is not incompatible with the public service function, but the efforts of Watterson and the AP to copyright their news stories represented a prioritizing of values that undermined the principle of news as a public service. Because U.S. society has long seen information and ideas as essential to democratic governance, efforts to establish a property right in news are further testimony to the changing relationship of newspapers, copyright, and the democratic process.

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84. Ibid., 12.

Ike's Red Scare: The Harry Dexter White Crisis

By David W. Guth

This article argues that the November 1953 disclosure that President Truman may have knowingly appointed a suspected Soviet spy to a sensitive government post ignited a political fire storm that hastened changes in Eisenhower administration public relations practices — changes that influence the conduct of presidential public relations to this day.

In the autumn of 1953, Harry Dexter White was five years gone and anything but forgotten. Just prior to his death in 1948, White had been accused of giving top-secret government documents to the Soviets. The public knew of the allegations against White, as well as of his sudden death. But what it didn't know was that President Harry S. Truman had apparently ignored several warnings about White's alleged espionage activities before appointing him to a high post with the International Monetary Fund. It was this revelation that led to a brief, but intense, public relations crisis that engulfed the Eisenhower administration.

Although most authors have treated it as a historical footnote, the Harry Dexter White crisis was much more. The controversy brought the president into conflict with two of the age's most public political figures, Truman on the left and Senator Joseph McCarthy on the right. This article argues that Eisenhower's hands-off managerial style, a management style described by Fred I. Greenstein in *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, was responsible for the creation of the controversy, one of the most heated during his eight years in office. However, it will also argue that it was Eisenhower's instrumental use of

language, also described by Greenstein, that defused a potentially damaging political crisis.[1]

The focus is on the Eisenhower administration's use of public relations. This paper is *not* about Harry Dexter White, whether he was a spy, or whether the Truman administration acted irresponsibly in matters of internal security. Those issues are left for others to debate.

It is in this context that it also is argued that the White controversy was a catalyst for change in the conduct of presidential news conferences. Many historians, such as Craig Allen in *Eisenhower and the Mass Media*, imply that the White crisis, among other events, pushed the administration toward these changes.[2] Although Carolyn Smith writes that Eisenhower and Press Secretary Jim Hagerty were very successful practitioners of news management,[3] White House documents from late 1953 show a president struggling to define a public relations strategy. Through an extensive analysis of archived documents, this paper explicitly argues that the White controversy impelled the administration to remove news conference prohibitions against direct attribution to the president — thus allowing Eisenhower to bypass reporters and go directly to the people through the electronic media. It also allowed him to indirectly challenge McCarthy without putting either his personal prestige or that of his office on the line.

The Debate Over Ike's Leadership

This examination of the Harry Dexter White crisis must be viewed within the context of the debate over the quality of leadership Eisenhower provided as resident of the United States from 1953 to 1961. John R. Green, in an essay in *Reexamining the Eisenhower Presidency*, wrote, "In few areas of modern presidential scholarship do the revisionists disagree among themselves as rabidly as do the Eisenhower revisionists."[4] Green identifies several revisionist views of President Eisenhower as: Political Grandfather, Engaged, Camouflaged Machiavellian, Man of the Middle, and Negative Success.[5]

The earliest views on the Eisenhower presidency were generally negative, declaring it a period of caretaker, do-nothing government. His critics say Eisenhower was indecisive, especially in the critical areas of dealing with the anti-Communist hysteria generated by Senator Joseph McCarthy and in providing presidential leadership at the height of the civil rights struggle. These

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1. Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), 57-99.
2. Craig Allen, *Eisenhower and the mass media: peace, prosperity, and prime-time TV* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).
3. Carolyn Smith, *Presidential Press Conferences: A Critical Approach* (New York, Westport and London: Praeger Publishers, 1990), 40.
4. John R. Green, "Bibliographic Essay: Eisenhower Revisionism, 1952-1992, a Reappraisal" in *Reexamining the Eisenhower Presidency*, ed. Shirley Anne Warshaw (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1993), 209.
5. Ibid, 209-220.

images, along Ike's propensity for malapropisms and his serious illnesses, have caused some to judge Eisenhower a weak and transitional figure.

With the passage of time has come an inevitable reassessment of the Eisenhower Era. New facts have placed Ike in a different light. Information coming out of the former Soviet Union — such as that casting new doubts on Alger Hiss' innocence[6] and that linking the development of the U.S.S.R.'s first atomic bomb to pilfered American plans[7] — suggests that Eisenhower was justified in his concerns about Communist espionage within the U.S. government.

For some, a new image of Eisenhower has emerged — that of a manager orchestrating the world stage through an unprecedented period of postwar prosperity and peace. Often cited is Greenstein, who wrote that Eisenhower maintained a "covert prime ministership" through the management practices of "hidden-hand leadership, instrumental use of language, a refusal to engage in personalities, action based upon political analysis and delegation selectively practiced."[8] Eisenhower's champions note that he successfully led the nation through a dangerous period in which any one of several events could have triggered a nuclear war.

It is appropriate that a similar reappraisal of Eisenhower's ability to communicate his vision of America has emerged. Sandwiched between the charismatic New Deal and the youthful vigor of the New Frontier, Eisenhower has suffered from comparison. Ike has often been portrayed as bland and uninspiring. Allen argues that Eisenhower contributed to this image because "so committed was Eisenhower to harmony and consensus that he concealed his personal determination toward achieving them, even though he often rocked the boat with historical consequences."[9] Only in recent years has a much different view emerged — that of a shrewd, non-confrontational, hidden-hand communications tactician who carefully cultivated an image that made him the most consistently popular president of the postwar period.[10] Indicative of this view is an incident that occurred early in the Eisenhower presidency that was widely publicized at the time but is now largely forgotten: the Harry Dexter White crisis.

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6. Sam Tanenhaus, "New reasons to doubt Hiss," *Wall Street Journal*, 18 November 1993, A-20.
7. Serge Schmemann, "Soviet A-bomb built from U.S. data, Russian says," *New York Times*. 14 January 1993, A-12.
8. Greenstein.
9. Allen.
10. George C. Edwards with Alec M. Gallup, *Presidential Approval* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 12-13. Eisenhower's highest Gallup Poll nationwide approval rating was seventy-nine percent during 14-19 December 1956. His lowest nationwide approval rating, forty-nine percent, was 16-21 July 1960. That was the only Gallup Poll of 119 taken during his term of office in which his nationwide approval rating dipped below fifty percent.

The Mysterious Harry Dexter White

This discussion of Eisenhower, his communications strategy and the controversy that severely tested both, can best be understood after some background on Harry Dexter White. Even before Attorney General Herbert Brownell Jr. invoked his name in a 6 November 1953 luncheon address before the Executives Club of Chicago, to many Americans, White was a mysterious figure. A U.S. Treasury Department employee since 1934, White had risen through the ranks to assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury at the time of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. On the day following the outbreak of war, he was given the authority, without the title, of assistant secretary by Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau Jr. The White Plan, which he wrote, became the basis for the creation of the International Monetary Fund. White would later serve eleven months as the first American Director of the International Monetary Fund.[11]

However, there was another side of White that would slowly emerge after the war. On 2 September 1939, one day after the German invasion of Poland, former Communist Whittaker Chambers turned over to authorities a list of names of people he said had transmitted government secrets to the Soviet Union. Among those on the list were Alger and Donald Hiss, rising officials in the State Department, and Nathan Witt, executive secretary of the National Labor Relations Board. White's name was not on the list. However, Chambers added White's name to the list when agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation questioned him two years later.

There was a second accuser: Elizabeth T. Bentley, a self-professed courier for NKVD, the Soviet secret service. Bentley identified White as a member of an espionage group working out of Washington known as the Silvermaster Group. The FBI took her charges seriously in November 1945 when, in an effort to prove that her charges were true, she gave agents $2,000 in $20 bills she said she got from a Russian she knew as Al. He turned out to be Anatole Gromov, first secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Washington and, according to the FBI, the probable head of NKVD in North America.[12]

It was at this point that the seeds for what would turn out to be one of the stormiest periods in the Eisenhower administration were sown. After Bentley had produced her "proof," FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover sent a "preliminary flash" warning to Brigadier General Harry Vaughan, a presidential military aide and liaison for FBI matters at the White House, on 8 November 1945. White's was the second name on the list of government officials suspected of espionage.[13] A second, more detailed FBI report on Bentley's statement containing eighty names, including White's, was sent to Vaughan for

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11. David Rees, *Harry Dexter White: A Study in Paradox* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1973), 9-10.
12. A.H. Raskin, "White Case: What's On The Record." *New York Times,* 15 November 1953, E-5.
13. Rees, 379.

the attention of President Truman on 4 December 1945. Copies were also sent to Attorney General Tom Clark and Secretary of State James F. Byrnes.[14] It has not been established that Truman actually saw either of those reports. However, Truman nominated Harry Dexter White as American Director of the International Monetary Fund on 23 January 1946.

A third FBI report on White, more detailed and specific regarding White than the previous two messages, was received by Vaughan on 4 February 1946. This report did catch the attention of White House officials. However, time conspired against the Truman administration. The White nomination cleared the Senate Committee on Banking and Currency the next day, 5 February. On 6 February, the FBI report came to the attention of Secretary of State Byrnes, who, in turn, brought it to the attention of President Truman. According to a later account given by Byrnes, Truman attempted to have the nomination withdrawn, only to learn that the Senate had already approved it earlier that afternoon.[15]

White assumed his post on 1 May 1946. He resigned in April 1947 for reasons that are not clear. Truman and his supporters later said that White was fired. However, Truman sent White a warm letter of regret in accepting his resignation.[16] Truman would later say he let White keep his job until there was no longer any danger of exposing an FBI investigation into subversive activities.[17] Citing unnamed government sources, *New York Times* reporter Arthur Krock later wrote that Truman's friendly letter was part of a plan to not arouse White's suspicions.[18]

White's name first publicly surfaced in connection with alleged Soviet espionage activities on 31 July 1948, when Bentley told her story in testimony before the House of Representatives Committee on Un-American Activities. Chambers told his story to the committee three days later. White testified before the committee on 13 August 1948, and denied his involvement with the Soviets. Three days later, White, who had a history of heart trouble, died of a heart attack at his home in Fitzwilliam, Massachusetts.[19] Harry Dexter White was never indicted or convicted of espionage or any other crimes.

The Search for a Public Relations Strategy

A major reason the Eisenhower administration stumbled into the White controversy appears related to its early problems in developing a long-range public relations strategy. The glow of Eisenhower's landslide victory over Stevenson one year earlier had long since worn off. As Eisenhower was nearing the end of his first year in office, he was frustrated by the lack of credit his

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14. "Political Storm: Brownell vs. Truman," *New York Times,* 15 November 1953, E-1.
15. Rees, 385-386.
16. "Political Storm: Brownell vs. Truman."
17. W. H. Lawrence, "Truman Accuses Brownell Of Lying," *New York Times,* 17 November 1953, A-1.
18. "Political Storm: Brownell vs. Truman."
19. Rees, 12-16.

administration was receiving in its efforts to stand firm against Communism, weed security risks out of government, and overhaul the federal tax system. The White House was battling with Democrats on the left and Senator Joseph McCarthy on the right for the hearts and minds of the American electorate. Although Eisenhower did not see his administration losing that struggle, archived documents suggest he didn't think he was winning it, either.

Eisenhower's 5 November 1953 memorandum to the cabinet contained both a résumé of administration successes and a call for action in getting the word out. Dated just one day after the first anniversary of his electoral triumph, the president wrote, "While key and top echelon figures in the fields of Journalism, Publications and Public Relations are pro-administration, yet the so-important lower echelons have not been too successfully wooed." Eisenhower cited what he called "the overworked red herring of McCarthyism" and a news-media focus on a Republican election setback in an October 1953 Wisconsin special congressional election as examples of how "this lower echelon 'slanting' of the news and administration stories" can do "inestimable damage."[20]

In a 28 September 1953, meeting with his White House staff, his first since the summer, Eisenhower spoke at length of the value of public relations. He defined public relations as "getting ideas put out in such a way that your purpose is actually understood by all people that need to understand it in order to get it done efficiently and well" The president said that public relations was a responsibility shouldered by the entire staff, not just the press secretary. He also told the staff that public relations was a subject that must come up directly or indirectly in every staff meeting.[21]

However, public relations in the Eisenhower administration remained an abstract concept to many. In her staff meeting notes of 29 September 1953, Ann C. Whitman, Eisenhower's personal secretary, wrote:

> Staff meeting this morning consisted of discussion by Walter Williams and his group of elaborate mechanics for coordination of public relations — which seems to mean speech efforts — of various administration officials. (For whatever it is worth, the whole business worried me because it sounded so fascist — you think this way, you say this in answer to that, etc.)[22]

The effective use of public relations was also very much on the mind of United Nations Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., who had also served as

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20. Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary Series, Ann Whitman File, Box 3, Eisenhower Library (Hereafter cited as DDE). Throughout this paper, direct quotations from White House documents will reflect the capitalization used in the original documents. The author also wishes to express his gratitude for the valuable research assistance provided by the staff and archivists at the Eisenhower Library in Abilene, Kansas.
21. Ann Whitman Diary Series, Ann Whitman File, Box 1, Eisenhower Library.
22. Ibid. Williams had been active in the Eisenhower campaign, Citizens for Eisenhower, and was serving as Under-secretary of Commerce.

Eisenhower's 1952 campaign manager. In a 15 October 1953 memorandum to Eisenhower, Lodge rejected the idea that the president, caught between the competing economic interests of inflation and tax reduction, would have no choice but to face the prospects of declining popularity. "The President *can* maintain his popularity, but to do so must seek to dominate public opinion," Lodge wrote. He added, "It is not difficult to control the items of news as they develop, to work them up carefully, to state them dramatically — to have something cooking all of the time."[23]

From the very start of the Eisenhower presidency, the focus of administration public relations strategy centered on the new massmedium of the age, television. The White House knew that it could be a powerful weapon in the battle for public opinion. Less than two weeks after the 1952 election, movie mogul Darryl F. Zanuck wrote the president-elect, "Talk frequently to the people. Revive the Fireside Chat, this time on television. Publicly announce on your return from Korea that you will regularly present the problems of the nation to the people."[24]

Before the inauguration, Eisenhower's team considered a proposal for a series of filmed monthly half-hour reports from the White House using "every applicable motion picture technique to accomplish its objectives."[25] A response by Abbott M. Washburn, deputy to the Special Assistant to the President, was typical of the reaction among administration officials. Washburn wrote, "For a lot of good reasons, I very much favor the ideas of television reports or chats by the President." However, he was concerned that a monthly schedule would demand too much of the president's time and that "you never heard an announcer say, 'you will now hear President Roosevelt in a fireside chat by transcription.' "[26]

As of October 1953, the President had made three nationwide television speeches. The last had been in June, to introduce Oveta Culp Hobby as his new secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. However, as Craig Allen has noted, the appearances "seemed to lack spark and imagination" when compared with entertainment programs that preceded and followed the president's remarks.[27] The White House was planning another television speech at year's end to promote its 1954 legislative agenda. But there was a sense that the same old formula was not going to work.

Even with this interest in television, Eisenhower chose to go slowly in his use of the medium. The president was concerned about making mistakes, as evidenced by an 5 August 1953 memorandum to Press Secretary Jim Hagerty:

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23. Administration Series, Brownell, Box 8, Eisenhower Library. Emphasis in original.
24. Central Files, Official Files, Box 415, Eisenhower Library. Emphasis in original.
25. "Report From The White House" proposal submitted by Sound Masters, Inc., of New York. Central Files, Official Files, Box 415, Eisenhower Library.
26. 20 March 1953 memo to C.D. Jackson attached to "Report From the White House" proposal, Central Files, Official Files, Box 415, Eisenhower Library.
27. Allen, 24.

> I heard this morning, after we returned, that my talk to the Governors' Conference was recorded and broadcast over one of the Washington stations at 10:30 last night.
>
> I would appreciate it if you would make sure that I am informed whenever my talk I make is either being broadcast live or recorded for later broadcast. I simply want to prevent any embarrassment that might possibly occur.[28]

In this day of aggressive, satellite-beamed reporting, it is hard to imagine a president with any expectation that some of his public words would not be available for broadcast. But that was not the reality of the media and presidency in the early 1950s.

This reality was also reflected in the conduct of presidential news conferences, which at the time of the White controversy disallowed direct attribution to the president. Radio and television journalists were required to gather information just the same as print reporters did — without using the tools of their trade, microphones and cameras. In a 2 November 1953 memorandum to Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson about the problem of news leaks, Eisenhower addressed what he called the "thorny" problem of news conferences

> It is difficult to be constantly on the alert against being pushed, through loaded or tricky questions, into statements which, taken out of context, prove startling and embarrassing. I do think, however, that it is dangerous to hold a press conference in *advance* of an event. Too often, it seems to me, we then are trapped into a revelation of confidential government planning. Finally, in spite of some criticism that has been leveled against me for the scarcity of the conferences I have held, I still firmly believe that it is better *not* to hold a conference unless there are developments that warrant it (and which will pretty much direct the questioning).[29]

Thus, just as the White controversy was about to grab center stage, Eisenhower's public relations strategy was evolving. In a 15 October 1953 memorandum to the president, Lodge urged Eisenhower to embrace the medium of television as never before:

> While the President always makes friends for himself wherever he goes, and the trips to various parts of the country tend to enhance his popularity. . . they are in many ways not worth the effort. I cannot get rid of the idea that with better lighting

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28. Central Files, Official Files, Box 415, Eisenhower Library.
29. DDE Diary Series, Ann Whitman File, Box 3, Eisenhower Library. Emphasis in original.

> and better makeup an entirely different type of television performance could be put on and that it would take me ten minutes to work it out. Eisenhower must be the first great *television President* just as Roosevelt was the first great *radio President.* This has not happened yet.[30]

Lodge reiterated this position in a 30 October 1953 letter to Eisenhower citing a Gallup Poll that had found that half all of American households were equipped with television sets, with the highest percentage of ownership among middle- and low-income families. "This is another confirmation of what we were saying the other day about the value of your becoming the 'T.V.' President," Lodge wrote. "It appears that not only would this be a convenient medium for you and one which would save your energy and strength, but that it is also particularly effective."[31]

There is a certain irony here. On the very same day Lodge was extolling the value of television in the Eisenhower administration's public relations efforts, the president spoke to his cabinet about the need for emphasizing "quality rather than quantity" in its public information and congressional liason personnel. A study of public information activities in the Department of Agriculture was cited. As a result, it was reported that the new administration policy "will probably result in a personnel reduction of thirty-three percent."[32]

Brownell Ignites a "Firestorm"

"It is a source of humiliation to every American that during the period of the Truman administration the Communists were so strikingly successful in infiltrating the government of the United States," Attorney General Brownell told business executives gathered for lunch at the Palmer House in Chicago on 6 November 1953. "The failure of our predecessors to defend the government from communist infiltration left the new administration a necessary but very difficult task."[33]

Brownell's prime example of the Truman administration's failure to safeguard national security was Harry Dexter White. "Harry Dexter White was a Russian spy," Brownell said. "He smuggled secret documents to Russian agents for transmission to Moscow. Harry Dexter White was known to be a Communist spy by the very people who appointed him to the most sensitive and important position he ever held in government service."[34]

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30. Administration Series, Brownell, Box 8, Eisenhower Library. Emphasis in original.
31. Central Files, Official Files, Box 415, Eisenhower Library.
32. Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, 30 October 1953, Cabinet Series, Box 2, Eisenhower Library.
33. "Ethics in Government," Brownell Papers, Box 154, Eisenhower Library.
34. Ibid.

In his 1993 autobiography, *Advising Ike: the Memoirs of Attorney General Herbert Brownell*, Brownell gave several reasons for resurrecting White's ghost. Not doing so, he argued, would have made him vulnerable to accusations of a coverup and, therefore, "just as culpable as Truman." He said he believed the public had the right to know about past espionage activities, especially because Congress was considering laws relating to internal security. Brownell also saw his charges as "an important contrast to the kind of slap-dash investigations of Communist infiltration that members of Congress such as Senators Joe McCarthy and William Jenner and Congressman Harold Velde were conducting."[35]

Greenstein appears to support Brownell's view. He has called the episode a thwarted foray into seizing the national security issue from McCarthy.[36] It is also consistent with several of the Eisenhower management strategies identified by Greenstein. Brownell was given considerable latitude in the conduct of his office — what Greenstein called "delegation selectively practiced."[37]

Within hours, the White controversy was raging in full fury. At his 4 p.m. press and radio conference, Hagerty disputed a statement made that afternoon by former President Truman to a wire service reporter claiming that White had been fired. "That statement is not true," Hagerty said. "Mr. White was not fired. He resigned." Hagerty's briefing that afternoon, less than two hours after the conclusion of Brownell's speech, contained specific details about White's government service and the FBI investigation surrounding him. He told the reporters that he had the facts in hand because, "When I saw (Truman's) statement on the ticker, I did some checking and here happen to be the facts."[38]

Although Hagerty's statement may, on the surface, be true, it doesn't tell the entire story. Brownell had attended Hagerty's press and radio conference the day before to discuss an executive order, "Safeguarding Official Information in the Interests of the Defense of the United States." Brownell even gave the reporters at that briefing advance copies of a speech he was going to make in Chicago the next day — not the one to the Executives Club, but one to the Associated Press Managing Editors Convention.[39] Hagerty would later acknowledge that it was after the 5 November press and radio conference that Brownell had given him the text of his Executives Club remarks. But Hagerty also stated that he was the only person at the White House to see the speech prior to delivery.[40]

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35. Herbert Brownell with John P. Burke, *Advising Ike: the Memoirs of Attorney General Herbert Brownell* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1993), 237.
36. Greenstein, 178.
37. Ibid, 85-86.
38. Press and Radio Conference, 6 November 1953, 4 p.m. EST, Hagerty Papers, Box 40. Eisenhower Library.
39. Press and Radio Conference, 5 November 1953, 4:02 p.m. EST, Hagerty Papers, Box 40, Eisenhower Library.
40. Press and Radio Conference, 16 November 1953, 10:35 a.m. EST, Hagerty Papers, Box 40, Eisenhower Library.

Again, Hagerty's remarks seem to dwell on the edge of truth. Although it was possible that the president did not see the text of Brownell's Executives Club remarks, Eisenhower was aware that the White case was going to be discussed. Ann Whitman's diary for 5 November indicates that the president called Brownell to discuss a segregation case. The diary also states: "Another subject: Brownell planning to speak tomorrow in Chicago, on employees security order. As example, will bring up Dexter White case. Already has checked with Jim Hagerty."[41] Sherman Adams, assistant to the president, also notes in his memoirs that Brownell had discussed the White case with him before calling the matter to Eisenhower's attention. Adams said the president "relied upon the judgment of his Attorney General as to the propriety and the political repercussions involved in releasing the facts of the case."[42]

The Brownell speech had been on a Friday, meaning that it had the weekend to smolder in the opinion columns of newspapers and on the Sunday interview programs. The Whitman diary for Saturday, 7 November, does not mention the White case by name. But public relations was clearly on the president's mind. In an Oval Office meeting with Commerce Secretary Sinclair Weeks, Eisenhower discussed the need for a "trouble shooter" to iron out differences between cabinet members and to "do anything the President might want." He spoke to Weeks, a former finance chairman of the Republican National Committee, of the need for the RNC to "sell public opinion" on the administration's program.[43] He also sent a memorandum to RNC Chairman Leonard Hall outlining a White House visitor's concerns about "generally poor public relations."[44]

With the start of the new week, the controversy over White heated to a boil. Truman and his supporters deeply resented what they perceived as Brownell's questioning of the former president's patriotism. While refusing for national security reasons to present documentation of the charges raised in the Chicago speech, Brownell issued a statement on 9 November expanding upon his earlier remarks. James F. Byrnes, the former Secretary of State who had since become Governor of South Carolina, substantiated Brownell's account. On the next day, 10 November, Truman, Byrnes, and former Attorney General Tom Clark, who had since become a U.S. Supreme Court Justice, were subpoenaed to testify before a congressional committee about their knowledge of the White case.[45] That evening, before a sympathetic audience in New York, the former president lashed out at "fake crusaders who dig up and distort records of the past to distract the attention of the people from the political failures of the

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41. DDE Diary Series, Ann Whitman File, Box 3, Eisenhower Library.
42. Sherman Adams, *Firsthand Report: The Story of the Eisenhower Administration* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), 137.
43. Ann Whitman Diary Series, Ann Whitman Files, Box 1, Eisenhower Library.
44. DDE Diary Series, Ann Whitman Files, Box 3, Eisenhower Library.
45. "Political Storm: Brownell vs. Truman."

present." According to newspaper accounts, the remark evoked the strongest ovation of the thirty bursts of applause during Truman's thirty-minute speech.[46]

This set the stage for what James Reston of the *New York Times* wrote was "one of the stormiest White House news conferences of recent years."[47] Another account of the 11 November session said, "The President arrived in jovial mood, apparently unaware of what was in store."[48] However, it is clear that Eisenhower had some inkling of the firestorm awaiting him in Room 474 of the Old State Department Building. Exactly one hour before the start of the news conference, the president telephoned Brownell in New York. Terse notes taken by Whitman of that conversation show that Eisenhower and Brownell wanted to get their stories straight:

> Called Herb Brownell, in N.Y. (9:15 a.m.) to coordinate statement to Press this morning. Will mention that he was advised by Attorney General that there was some very serious evidence that a man high up in govt. had communist leanings. And DDE felt it would be a violation of his (AG) duty if he did not make it available. Could say we knew Report on White came to White House, but nothing to indicate it went to Mr. Truman. (Brownell now has evidence it did go to Truman.) (Dulles told DDE last evening that he has memo in his office indicating it did go to Truman.) Re Truman subpoena, DDE disapproves. Brownell agrees it was mistake & very carelessly handled. In reply to Press, DDE will simply state he thinks country should be disposed to take Truman's word for whatever his memory is. & he sees no point in putting him before investigation.[49]

In fact, the president did deliver this message in a short, hostile nineteen-minute news conference. When asked if he thought Truman had knowingly appointed a Communist spy, Eisenhower said, "I don't believe — put it in this way — that a man in that position knowingly damaged the United States." Nevertheless, it was a rough session. When Pete Brandt of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* asked Eisenhower if he thought "the administration's action, in virtually putting the label of traitor on a former President, is likely to damage our foreign relations," the president bruskly responded, "I reject the premise. I wouldn't answer such a question."[50]

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46. Peter Kihss, "Truman Attacks 'Fake Crusaders,'" *New York Times*, 11 November 1953, 21.
47 James Reston, "President Opposes Truman Subpoena," *New York Times,* 12 November 1953, 1
48. "Political Storm: Brownell vs. Truman."
49. DDE Diary Series, Ann Whitman File, Box 5, Eisenhower Library.
50. Official White House Transcript, President Eisenhower's Press and Radio Conference, No. 20. Hagerty Papers, Box 69, Eisenhower Library.

The attorney general softened his remarks on Truman several hours after the president's news conference. He told reporters that while there had been "laxity" at the White House in handling White's appointment, "there is no intention of impugning the loyalty of any high official of the prior administration." In light of the earlier telephone conversation with Eisenhower, it is obvious that Brownell wanted to make certain he was speaking from the same script. However, in defense of his own position, Brownell also made public the memorandum that Dulles had told the president proved Truman had seen the FBI reports on White.[51]

The Eisenhower and Brownell statements are consistent with two other management strategies identified by Greenstein. Through the "instrumental use of language," the two men removed much of the rancor from the debate. It also played into another often-used strategy, a "refusal to engage in personalities." The use of these two strategies would become even more important later in the White crisis.[52]

Despite the unusual heat generated by the confrontation at the news conference, Eisenhower's strategy for defusing the controversy appeared to work. "President Eisenhower took some of the personal and political rancor out of the Harry Dexter White case today by defending the patriotism of former President Truman," the *New York Times* reported on its front page the next day. The article also included Brownell's comments.[53] The president's remarks also made a favorable impression on British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who at the end of a message about an upcoming conference in Bermuda, wrote, "For your eyes alone: I was so delighted to read what you said to Press about Harry Truman. He is rather a friend of mine."[54]

An angry Truman, in a 16 November nationally televised address from Kansas City, accused Brownell of lying in the White case and said that the Eisenhower administration had "debased" the presidency by "embracing McCarthyism."[55] However, in that same speech, Truman contradicted his earlier statements by admitting that he had read the FBI report on White. Truman also undermined his claim of ignorance by vigorously arguing for White's innocence. The former president damaged his credibility even further when he suggested that he had worked out a plan with J. Edgar Hoover to keep White in his job, under surveillance, to avoid tipping off the Soviets. During a congressional appearance with Brownell the next day, Hoover denied that such a deal had been struck.[56]

President Eisenhower distanced himself further from the tempest by declining further comment on the White controversy at his radio and press conference on 18 November. Eisenhower used a handwritten statement scratched

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51. Reston.
52. Greenstein, 57-99.
53. Ibid.
54. DDE Series, Box 3, Eisenhower Library.
55. Lawrence.
56. Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Volume Two - The President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 139

onto paper from a yellow legal pad as a guide for his meeting with reporters. That note read, in part, "I am not going to comment this morning on the White Case." Referring to the congressional testimony one day earlier by Brownell and Hoover, the note added, "I believe both performed a public service."[57] The president also insisted that Communists in government would not be a major issue in the 1954 congressional elections.

Although it is tempting to view the president's handwritten statement as an insignificant action, it bears closer scrutiny. Eisenhower's silence on White served him well. Truman had given his side of the story in his televised speech. In doing so, the former president had made a number of contradictory statements. These, combined with Brownell's and Hoover's congressional testimony, undercut Truman's credibility. Because of these factors, the president had no reason to add fuel to the controversy. Through this "instrumental use of language," Eisenhower's statements took the steam out of congressional efforts to force testimony from Truman, Byrnes, and Clark. This also may have been an early manifestation of a policy that Carolyn Smith writes served the administration well: a decision by Eisenhower and Hagerty to avoid direct confrontations with the news media[58] — consistent with the "no personalities" strategy.

Yet there was still one more twist in this drama. Because his name had been used in Truman's speech, McCarthy demanded and got equal time from the networks. He replied eight days later in a televised address that Sherman Adams described as more of "a tirade against the White House and the State Department" than a response to the former president. McCarthy predicted that the Communists in government issue *would* play an important role in the 1954 congressional elections.[59] Although this created a headache for the administration, McCarthy's remarks did divert criticism from Eisenhower to the junior senator from Wisconsin.

A second and perhaps greater irony is that McCarthy's televised response to Truman's Kansas City speech may have opened the door for the most significant change in media relations to come out of the White controversy. After McCarthy's speech, considerable pressure was placed upon Eisenhower to publicly rebuke the Wisconsin senator. This pressure came from both within and outside of the administration.

Eisenhower's response came in the form of a prepared statement at the start of his 2 December radio and press conference. Without mentioning him by name, consistent with the "no personalities" strategy, the president distanced himself from McCarthy when he said, "I repeat my previously expressed conviction that fear of Communists actively undermining our government will not be an issue in the 1954 elections. Long before then this administration will have made such progress in rooting them out under the security program

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57. 18 November 1953, News Conference File, Hagerty Papers, Box 40, Eisenhower Library.
58. Smith, 37-40.
59. Adams, 135-136.

developed by Attorney General Brownell that this will no longer be considered a serious menace."[60] Because the rules of the president's radio and press conferences prohibited direct attribution, a copy of the president's statement was released in the form of a news release after the session had ended.

Once again, Eisenhower chose a nondirect approach to deal with a thorny problem. For both personal and political reasons, the president did not want to elevate McCarthy to his level through a direct challenge. Instead, he crafted a carefully worded statement that encouraged the media to make appropriate inferences. The media accommodated his wishes. It wasn't the first time Eisenhower had read a prepared statement at the start of his news conference; he had done so as recently as 8 October.[61] However, this application of the "instrumental use of language" strategy served Eisenhower's purposes well: to get his exact words on the record — ones that distanced him from his right-wing antagonist — without having to directly confront McCarthy.

It also set the stage for an even more significant development. At his briefing following the president's next radio and press conference, held on 16 December, Hagerty surprised White House reporters when he announced that an audio recording of the news conference had been released to the broadcast networks. He went on to say that reporters were free to directly quote the president from the transcripts. "I think this is the first step in opening it (presidential news conferences) up to other media," Hagerty said.

Thus the Harry Dexter White crisis is more than a historical footnote. Coming on the heels of the successful resolution of the White controversy, it is a reasonable inference that the release of an audio recording of the radio and press conference is a logical outgrowth of the 2 December release of the president's news conference statement. Eisenhower, who only four days prior to Brownell's Chicago speech had written of his doubts about the value of presidential news conferences, now appeared to embrace them. It was also on 16 December that Hagerty said that the White House was "kicking around" the idea of a televised news conference, although that did not occur until more than a year later.[62] This is a far cry from a president who had been concerned only four months earlier that a speech in Denver had been recorded for broadcast without his knowledge.

The Aftermath of the White Case

It is clear that Eisenhower underestimated the furor Brownell's speech would create. In a 23 November 1953 letter to General Alfred M. Gruenther, the president wrote, "The White case was unquestionably distorted in the papers, and I am quite ready to admit that the manner of its presentation was probably not

60. Statement by the President, Ann Whitman Diary Series, Ann Whitman Files, Box 1, Eisenhower Library.
61. Ambrose, 131.
62. Hagerty Papers, Box 40, Eisenhower Library.

the best."[63] In her diary, Ann Whitman, the president's personal secretary, wrote: "Personally I am convinced the boss did not have any inkling of tempest to be aroused; he said that Brownell had told him he could not in conscience 'refrain from telling the story *now.*'"[64]

Eisenhower's management style contributed to the controversy. Minutes of the 12 November cabinet meeting show the president reaffirming that his "delegation selectively practiced" management strategy less than twenty-four hours after his stormy news conference:

> The President noted a press report that he was not supporting his own Attorney General, and he emphasized that he had consulted with Mr. Brownell prior to his press conference remarks. He stressed that Cabinet members have extensive authority in both their own right and acting for him and that he was determined to stand behind them. He said that with obvious necessary exceptions he would back up their actions with all his strength.[65]

Eisenhower's management style, along with Brownell's expressed desire to contrast McCarthy's "slap-dash" tactics with the administration's internal security efforts, appears to have been the catalyst for the Chicago speech. Brownell may also have been reacting to pressure from Lodge, who, according to the official minutes of the 23 October cabinet meeting, "urged that there be a drumfire of press releases on this matter whenever employees are separated for security reasons."[66] It is important to remember that Lodge often served as Eisenhower's political barometer. The president regularly sought out his former campaign manager's thoughts for dealing with the partisan questions Eisenhower so very much disliked to address himself. This was well-known among the cabinet.

Whatever the motivations, the dredging up of Harry Dexter White's ghost was not a successful public relations tactic. It can be argued that the debate legitimized concerns about Communist infiltration and provided a sharp contrast between the national security actions of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations. However, Greenstein noted that it "backfired" in three critical ways: by giving an appearance that the White House was trying to "outdo McCarthy," by alienating Democrats upon whom Eisenhower often relied for support, and by providing McCarthy with a platform for attacking both Truman and Eisenhower.[67]

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63. DDE Diary Series, Ann Whitman File, Box 3, Eisenhower Library.
64. Ann Whitman Diary Series, Ann Whitman File, Box 1, Eisenhower Library. Emphasis in original.
65. Cabinet Series, Ann Whitman File, Box 2, Eisenhower Library.
66. Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, 23 October 1953, Cabinet Series, Box 2, Eisenhower Library
67. Greenstein, 179-180.

Eisenhower does not appear to have been alone in underestimating the fallout. There is nothing on the record to suggest that Hagerty, who had also been consulted prior to the Chicago speech, had cautioned the Attorney General to tone down his remarks. Brownell, who ignited the "firestorm," would later admit that the controversy overshadowed the points he was trying to make in his speech, "the need to take matters of internal security seriously" and that "Communist infiltration could be pursued in a responsible manner and based on facts, not wild charges."[68]

Ironically, the White controversy was the catalyst for major changes in the manner in which the White House dealt with the Washington press corps. As noted earlier, the uproar over Brownell's remarks came at a time when the White House was frustrated with the media and groping for a public relations strategy.

It was during the height of the controversy, on 23 November 1953, that Eisenhower sent his cabinet a memorandum on the need for establishing "an effective public relations position" for the administration. It was the second such memorandum that month. In it, Eisenhower wrote, "We have a task that is not unlike the advertising and sales activity of a great industrial organization. It is first necessary to have a good product to sell; next it is necessary to have an effective and persuasive way of informing the public of the excellence of the product." Eisenhower also discussed the value of bringing in outside experts to help focus the administration's public relations efforts.[69]

Although White House public relations strategy had been evolving during the president's first year in office, the timing of this memorandum suggests the White controversy may have added a sense of urgency to this effort. Perhaps not coincidentally, it was also during this period that Adams asked Hagerty to contact actor Robert Montgomery about assisting in production of a yearend presidential television address in which Eisenhower was planning to push his 1954 legislative agenda.[70] In doing so, Montgomery became the first presidential television consultant.

And what was the public fallout from the intense media coverage associated with the White crisis? It appears to have been negligible. Eisenhower's approval rating in a Gallup Poll taken in the week before Brownell's address stood at sixty-one percent. It dipped slightly to fifty-nine percent during the week after the 18 November press and radio conference in which the president sought to end the controversy. This apparent two percentage-point drop in approval can be accounted for by normal sampling error. The second Gallup Poll came on the heels of Truman's nationally televised address, which could have had a significant, even if temporary, effect on the president's approval rating. It is reasonable to assume that the White House's

68. Brownell, 241.
69. DDE Diary Series, Ann Whitman Files, Box 3, Eisenhower Library.
70. Central Files, Official Files, Box 415, Eisenhower Library.

damage control efforts succeeded.[71] This also may explain why so little attention has since been paid to this episode.

Conclusion

Rather than a historical footnote, November-December 1953 marked a turning point in the Eisenhower administration's media relations. This is especially evident when viewing the evolution of the radio and press conferences from the hostile 11 November session, Ike's twentieth in office, to the groundbreaking 16 December meeting, his twenty-third in office. Eisenhower moved from a direct confrontation with reporters on 11 November, to a functional "no comment" on 18 November, to limited direct attribution on 2 December, to complete direct attribution on 16 December. The conduct of presidential news conferences had changed virtually overnight.

It was a move that was, arguably, inevitable. Developments in television technology were making it easier to use the medium as a direct link to the people. As Carolyn Smith also notes in *Presidential Press Conferences: A Critical Approach*, it was Theodore Roosevelt who first embraced the news conference as a channel to communicate his message. She also writes that it was Truman who had first opened up news conferences by liberalizing the rules of direct attribution and permitting occasional excerpts available for radio broadcast. The momentum toward more open presidential news conferences clearly predates Eisenhower.[72]

However, it is also clear from internal memoranda that the White House, especially Eisenhower, was dissatisfied in late 1953 with the news coverage it was receiving. Although still somewhat wary of live television and radio, Eisenhower was beginning to appreciate the value of having his words transmitted directly to the people without translation. However inevitable this evolution in news conference rules of engagement may now seem, the precise timing of these changes leads to one conclusion: that the Harry Dexter White public relations crisis accelerated those changes.

The 11 November 1953 radio and press conference appears to have been a watershed event. On that day, the president may have learned the true value of the news conference as a platform for his ideas. By defending Truman's patriotism and saying he opposed the subpoenaing of Truman, Byrnes, and Clark, Eisenhower had begun to defuse the controversy. Frustrated by the coverage of that stormy session, Eisenhower and his advisers accelerated their search for ways to get their message to the people without having it first digested by what they saw as biased White House reporters. Eisenhower strengthened his position in the 18 November meeting with reporters by limiting further debate on White. The transformation of the presidential news conference was completed with the 2 December decision to ease and the 16 December decision to virtually remove restrictions on direct attribution. In just

71. Edwards and Gallup, 13.
72. Smith, 15-40.

one month, the presidential news conference emerged from its origins as an exclusive reporters-only affair into a town meeting the entire world could witness.

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'Killing Me Softly'? The Newspaper Press and the Reporting on the Search For a More Humane Execution Technology

By Marlin Shipman

Fascination with new technology led the press to focus its death penalty reporting on the efficiency of the latest techniques rather than the question of capital punishment.

The press and the American public have a long-standing love affair with technological innovation, and technological innovations have been evident during the past one hundred years or so in efforts to make capital punishment in the United States more humane.

This study will attempt to describe how the newspaper press has reported on technological changes in capital punishment. The purposes of this study are several. One is simply to begin to develop a body of literature about the subject of the newspaper press and capital punishment. A 1993 literature review showed no books published about the newspaper press and capital punishment in the United States. Some research has recently been done about the relationship between the newspaper press and capital punishment, and it is hoped this article will add to that literature.[1] A second purpose is to determine how the newspaper press reported about executions when technological changes were introduced. This is to determine if the reporting process fits within the identified

1. Information about the press and capital punishment is generally scattered throughout books on capital punishment, but no uniform effort to study the relationship has been made. There have been very few journal articles about how the press covers capital punishment.

framework concerning press reports of technological innovations or change. A third purpose of the study is to determine, as much as it is possible, the short and long-term ramifications of press reports. These might include such things as the denial of press access to executions in New York state after press reports about the first electrocution, the introduction or passage of legislation barring such methods of execution, or any of several other government or public responses.

The technology of the death penalty has in some states gone from hanging — used in almost all states prior to the turn of the twentieth century — to electrocution, or to lethal gas, or, most recently, to lethal injection. These changes include the change to electrocution in the 1890s, to lethal gas in the 1920s and 1930s, and to lethal injection in the 1980s and 1990s. The United States, the only western democracy still actively using the death penalty, is also perhaps the only nation using so many different methods of execution. A variety of methods are still used. As one writer put it, "As with so many other goods and services, America offers a greater variety of execution than any other country."[2]

In each instance the change in execution technology was implemented by state legislatures to lessen the brutality associated with executions. Legislatures in New York in the early 1890s, in California and Missouri in the 1930s, and in Maryland in the 1990s, flatly stated as much. New York's governor said in 1885 in an annual message to the legislature that hanging was barbaric, and that a more scientific and humane method of capital punishment should be sought.[3] And, the legislatures might have been influenced by the press. The *New York Times*, for example, in 1887 said in an editorial that executing women might not seem so repulsive, or be so infrequent, if some alternative to hanging could be found.[4] Three years later, New York became the first state to use electrocution as a means of capital punishment.

The technological changes to lessen brutality were similar in that respect to the move from public executions in the county in which the crime was committed, to the current more private executions within prison walls. This move also was designed to lessen the apparent brutality of executions, especially what the legislatures perceived as the unseemly barbaric reactions of crowds witnessing the executions.[5] When this happened, as one scholar wrote,

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2. Jacob Weisberg, "This is Your Death," *The New Republic,* 1 July 1991, 23-27.
3. Deborah W. Denno. "Is Electrocution An Unconstitutional Method Of Execution? The Engineering of Death Over The Century," *William and Mary Law Review 35* (1994): 566.
4. *New York Times,* 1 March 1887, 4. An editorial.
5. For a famous example of barbaric crowd reactions at public hangings that later resulted in legislative action to move executions out of public view, read coverage of the hanging of Rainey Bethea in 1936 in Owensboro, Kentucky. See coverage in the *Louisville Courier-Journal* and *Louisville Times,* 14 August - 2 September 1936, and in the *New York Times,* 15 August 1936, 30, and 24 August 1936, sec. IV, 6.

"newspaper editors stood ready to provide coverage just at the moment readers desired accounts."[6]

News reports about executions in which different technology was used may have something to do with the acceptance or rejection by the public of capital punishment. One might expect that news reports about new execution technology would, in general, be optimistic about the change.

For example, Dorothy Nelkin, author of a book on how the press reports science and technology, points out that:

> In article after article, extravagant claims are made made about technological change; each new development promises a transformation of everyday life, whether for good or ill. Conveyed in these reports is a sense of awe about the power of technology, resembling in some ways the presentation of science in the press. But there is a difference: whereas science appears in the press as an ultimate authority, technology appears as the cutting edge of history, as the new frontier.[7]

The most recent change — to lethal injection — is described by author Stephen Trombley as being popular "because it is, first and foremost, a medical procedure. It has the appearance of being more 'scientific' than shooting, hanging, gassing, or electrocution."[8]

As Nelkin points out, some reporting about technological innovation "is apocalyptic" but press reports are "mainly promotional; the dominant message conveyed is that the new development will give society the magic to cure economic or social ills."[9] The social ill in this case is how the state can execute those it has judged to be its more deviant citizens in a humane way. If executions are painless and humane they are less subject to be criticized as cruel and unusual punishment, and to be criticized as barbaric, although they might still be criticized for those and other reasons.

The Death Penalty as a Topic of Press Interest

The death penalty has been controversial for centuries, dating to at least about 200 A.D., and apparently was a major matter of concern for Talmudic

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6. Louis P. Masur, *Rites of Execution: Capital Punishment and the Transformation of American Culture, 1776-1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) 114, and Masur also provides a good general discussion in his book. See also, Leon Shaskolsky Sheleff. *Ultimate Penalties: Capital Punishment, Life Imprisonment, Physical Torture* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1987).
7. Dorothy Nelkin, *Selling Science: How the Press Covers Science and Technology* (New York: W.H. Freeman and Co., 1987) 33-34.
8. Stephen Trombley, *The Execution Protocol* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc.) 1992, 71.
9. Nelkin, 34.

rabbis.[10] Many famous philosophers, including John Locke, Emmanuel Kant, Jeremy Bentham, Cesare Beccaria, Voltaire, and John Stuart Mill, have expressed opinions about the death penalty. Distinguished Americans such as lawyer Clarence Darrow, legal scholar Zechariah Chafee, and contemporary scholar Walter Berns, have spanned many years of arguments, pro and con, about the penalty.[11] As might be expected, famous news editors and reporters, ranging from Horace Greeley, Parke Godwin, and William Cullen Bryant in earlier times, to *Miami Herald* investigative reporter Gene Miller, former *New York Times* writer Tom Wicker, and others in more contemporary times, have been involved in the capital punishment controversy, in some cases actively serving on anti-death penalty committees in the states.[12] As far back as colonial days and the early days of the nation, newspapers were heavily involved in the reporting of executions.[13] Thus, the newspaper press has always had an interest in capital punishment, and perhaps a role to play in regard to public attitudes about the death penalty, or about the methods of execution.

Method

This research studied newspaper press reports of executions in several states when there was a change in the method or technology of execution. The dates of the implementation of the changes were obtained from the comprehensive list of state executions in William J. Bowers's et al., *Legal Homicide: Death as Punishment in America, 1864-1982*,[14] or, in the case of changes since 1982, by a reading of the *New York Times Index*. Available microfilm of news reports from the states in which the executions occurred was examined, or in some instances stories were obtained from individual newspaper

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10. Eugene Block, *When Men Play God: The Fallacy of Capital Punishment* (San Francisco: Cragmont Publications, 1983), Leo Pfefer, "The Death Penalty and American Jewry," *The Humanist*, January/February 1991, 22-3+.
11. See, for example, Bonnie Szumski, Lynn Hall, Susan Bursall, eds., *The Death Penalty: Opposing Viewpoints* (St. Paul: Greenhaven Press, 1986); Walter Berns, *For Capital Punishment: Crime and the Morality of the Death Penalty* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, Inc., 1979); Donald L. Smith, *Zechariah Chafee: Defender of Liberty and Law* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).
12. For examples of journalists who have been involved in the controversies, see, for example, Philip English Mackey, ed. *Voices Against Death. American Opposition to Capital Punishment, 1787-1975* (New York: Burt Franklin & Co. Inc., 1976); Hugo A. Bedau, Michael L. Radelet, and Constance E. Putnam, *In Spite of Innocence; Erroneous Convictions in Capital Cases* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992); John Lofton, *Justice and the Press* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), John Hohenberg, *The Pulitzer Prize Story* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).
13. Dan Schiller, *Objectivity and the News* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981).
14. William J. Bowers with Glenn L. Pierce and John F. McDevitt, *Legal Homicide: Death as Punishment in America, 1864-1982* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1984).

libraries or state press associations. If those were unavailable, microfilm from a regional newspaper that covered the state was examined. The author of this study does not claim that the newspapers are representative or typical of the nation's press as a whole during any of the time periods studied. But whenever possible newspapers chosen for analysis were prominent newspapers that were located in the states in which the executions occurred, such as the *New York Times*, the *Phoenix Gazette*, and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and *Kansas City Times* and *Star*, or were prominent regional newspapers that covered nearby states, as in the case of the *Washington Post* coverage of Maryland's executions, and the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*'s coverage of the Mississippi executions. Microfilm of the *Baltimore Sun* in Maryland, and of the Jackson, Mississippi, newspapers are examples of newspapers unavailable to the author during the time of this study. Primary source material was used for the most part in this study, supplemented by secondary sources when necessary or applicable.

Prior to 1890, virtually all states used hanging as a method of capital punishment. Thus, the change in New York state in 1890 from hanging to electrocution was important because it was the first "scientific" change. This change was extensively reported upon, and therefore makes up much of the first part of this paper. Later changes discussed include the change to lethal gas and to lethal injection.

The study is qualitative. Stories were analyzed to determine how the press reported about the technology of executions inasmuch as the unquestioned faith in technology is concerned. Stories also were analyzed to determine if any changes came about as a result of the reporting, and what those changes might have been, and whether they had any effect on capital punishment.

The following executions, and newspaper coverage of them, were analyzed:

Condemned's name	Execution place, date	Newspaper studied
William Kemmler	New York, 6 August 1890	*New York Times* *The Times* of London
Harris A Smiler James Slocum Joseph Wood Subihick Jugigo	New York, 7 July 1891 (all four executed on the same day)	*New York Times*
Martin D. Loppy	New York, 7 December 1891	*New York Times*
Charles McElvaine	New York, 8 February 1892	*New York Times*
Jeremiah Cotto	New York, 28 March 1892	*New York Times*
Joseph L. Tice	New York, 18 May 1892	*New York Times*
Gee Jon	Nevada	*New York Times*
Fred Hernandez Manuel Hernandez	Arizona, 6 July 1934 (executed together)	*Phoenix Gazette*

Earl Gardner	Arizona, 13 July 1936	*Phoenix Gazette*
Albert Kessell Robert Lee Cannon	California, 2 December 1938 (executed together)	*San Francisco Examiner*
William Wright John Brown	Missouri, 4 March 1938 (executed together)	*St. Louis Post-Dispatch* *Kansas City Star* *Kansas City Times*
Raymond Boyer	Missouri, 5 March 1938	*St. Louis Post-Dispatch* *Kansas City Star* and *Times*
Gerald Gallego	Mississippi, 3 March 1955	*Memphis Commercial Appeal*
Eddie Lee Daniels	Maryland, 28 June 1957	*Washington Post & Times Herald*
Charles Brooks, Jr.	Texas, 12 December 1982	*New York Times*
John Thanos	Maryland, 16 May 1994	*Washington Post*

The First Execution by Electrocution: Reports Prior to the Execution

In 1890 the method of execution underwent perhaps its most dramatic shift. Electrocution replaced hanging in New York; this began a trend in other states toward the use of electrocution. Almost all states had hanged condemned prisoners up to the 1890s and most continued hanging for several years to come, although many eventually changed to electrocution. Many states continued to use electrocution until lethal injection became the method of choice beginning in the 1980s. Some states still electrocute.

On 6 August 1890, William Kemmler, a Buffalo, New York, fruit peddlar, was the first person in the United States to die in the electric chair. He was executed for killing his lover. The execution was a gruesome affair and a mess.[15]

The news stories prior to the execution depicted controversy, rumors and an economic battle between two economic giants — George Westinghouse and Thomas Edison. Edison had been told by Alfred P. Southwick, a member of the New York State commission on capital punishment, and one who later witnessed the Kemmler execution, that an alternative was needed to hanging because hanging was too barbaric. Edison opposed capital punishment, but his direct current (DC) system was being replaced by Westinghouse's alternating

15. For accounts of the execution, see Trombley, *The Execution Protocol,* 17-22; Denno, "Is Electrocution An Unconstitutional Method of Execution?"

current (AC). Edison attempted to show that the AC system was very powerful, so powerful that it would be a danger in the home. Thus, Edison's and Westinghouse's interest was not in capital punishment per se, but in adoption of their DC or AC systems for public use.[16] Electricity was relatively new and not much understood. For example, Dr. Joseph Fowler, a Buffalo, New York, coroner in 1881, was said by the newspaper to have done an autopsy in 1881 on Edward Smith, who the newspaper said was the first person in the United States to "be killed by a shock from a dynamo. . ." Fowler said death for Smith had been instantaneous. How he determined that was left unsaid. However, he was confident that electricity would quickly and painlessly execute a condemned man." 'I am confident, from the description of the apparatus and the power of the current that will be sent through his body, that he will be a dead man the instant the switch is turned,' he said."[17]

The change to electrocution came as a result of the electrification of western society. It is not surprising that New York was the first state to adopt electrocution, because much of the experimental commercial use of electricity was in New York City. In 1882 the Edison Electric Illuminating Company of New York built the first central generating station on Pearl Street in New York City.[18] Also, some publishers were heavily involved in electrification. Henry Villard, who purchased controlling interest in the *New York Post* in 1881, was on the board of directors of Edison Electric Illuminating Company, and of the Edison Electric Light Company. He invested heavily in Edison's companies.[19]

The Kemmler execution was big news, primarily because of the change in the method of execution. The public and the press were excited and apparently wanted all the information possible. For example, on one occasion when the townspeople erroneously thought the execution was about to take place, a crowd of about a thousand people quickly assembled. The *Times* reported the crowd as quiet and said there was a "feeling of awe" in the crowd, apparently not because of the impending death of Kemmler, for there was no talk of Kemmler, the paper reported. Instead the execution was looked upon as "the climax of the long contest that has been going on over the beginning of electrical execution."[20]

Kemmler's impending execution was reported in the *Times* as being of great scientific value. Days before the execution it was referred to as "the great experiment."[21] A Buffalo, New York, electrician who the *Times* said had worked on perfecting the death machine, said, "'No electrician . . . who understands the subject and knows what the apparatus is can doubt that it will

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16. "The Time Machine, 1890. One Hundred Years Ago," *American Heritage,* July/August 1990, 36. "He May Be Killed To-Day," *New York Times,* 4 August 1890, 1.
17. "Kemmler's Last Night," *New York Times,* 6 August 1890, 1.
18. Thomas P. Hughes, *Networks of Power: Electrification in Western Society, 1880-1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 39.
19. Ibid., 75.
20. "Kemmler's Last Night," 1.
21. "He May Be Killed To-Day," 1.

kill Kemmler.'"[22] And, importantly, it would not just kill Kemmler, but kill him humanely. A prison official said he did not think Kemmler would feel anything. The paper reported, "The electrode, he said, would be applied to his skull and spinal column in such a way that the current would paralyze the brain instantly and destroy all sensation."[23]

Kemmler's humane death — indeed, the fact of his death — almost became lost in the marveling about the gains science would make from the execution. It was reported that an immediate autopsy after the electrocution would "furnish an almost unplowed field for scientific discovery." This was because although autopsies had been done on a few accidental electrocution victims in the past, the autopsies had been delayed. But this time, "Death will take the place of life under conditions which famous men of science have devised."

> The body will then immediately pass into hands of pathologists eminent in their profession, and the search for knowledge will begin with the zeal that professional men have in the discovery of truth. There can be no doubt that this autopsy will be so thorough that it will pass down to history in medical annals.[24]

Unfortunately, for the men of science and for newspaper reporters who so wildly speculated, the doctors were baffled because the body was still very hot following the execution. This caused them to delay the autopsy for several hours. The scientists apparently did not know that a body, following an electrocution, is so hot that it can blister one's hands to touch it.[25] Their lack of knowledge is understandable because apparently no one had ever had the opportunity to perform an autopsy on an electrocution victim so soon after death. Also, because Kemmler had lived through the first jolt, some feared that he might still somehow be alive. That obviously would give one pause before performing an autopsy.[26]

In the final story before Kemmler's execution the next day, the *Times* ironically raised a question. It was ironic because of the seeming faith the newspaper's reporters had placed in science, and because the questions about whether the use of electricity would work for an execution had not previously been raised in any substantial way, if at all. Near the end of a page one story the newspaper said, "The one great question now is, Will it be well done, or will it result in such a manner that humanity will condemn the law which brought it about?"[27] The question proved to be prophetic in that the execution was not

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22. "Death Is Drawing Nearer," *New York Times,* 5 August 1890, 1.
23. "He May Be Killed To-Day," 1.
24. "Death is Drawing Nearer," 1.
25. For a vivid description of what occurs to a condemned person during the various forms of execution, see Weisberg, "This is Your Death."
26. "Far Worse Than Hanging," *New York Times,* 7 August 1890, 1.
27. "Kemmler's Last Night," 1.

done well, but badly botched. And, although the execution did bring considerable condemnation in the United States and in Great Britain, it did not bring an end to electrical executions. And, because of the way the execution was botched, the "well done" phrase could, after the fact, be construed as a very bad pun.

Reports After the Execution: An Indignant Press

The lead on the story in the *Times* about the execution sums up how things went:

> A sacrifice to the whims and theories of the coterie of cranks and politicians who induced the Legislature of this state to pass a law supplanting hanging by electrical execution was offered today in the person of William Kemmler, the Buffalo murderer. He died this morning under the most revolting circumstances and . . . (how he died) was a disgrace to civilization.[28]

Kemmler did not die after the first electrical jolt and had to receive a second. Some of those watching the execution became ill or fainted and the district attorney who prosecuted the case fled the room.[29] The news report said the execution was so terrible that the word "unsuccessful. . . fails to convey the idea."[30] The *Times*, in a partially erroneous speculation, said that the public would demand repeal of the law providing for execution by electrocution. ". . . it is the first and last electrical execution that this State will ever witness."[31] The last part of the statement proved to be erroneous.

Apparently, part of what had caused the horrible mess was that twenty incandescent lamps had been hooked to the line leading to the chair, to indicate the presence of voltage. The *Times* reported that this reduced the voltage from 1700 volts to 700 volts, thus slowly cooking to death poor Kemmler. The story was major news, covering more than seven full columns of type with no illustrations.

Historian Frank Luther Mott wrote that journalists were not allowed to witness the execution because of a New York law that limited those who could attend, but he said that the law was changed the next year, and the first stories about electrocutions were written in 1892 by six New York reporters, including Arthur Brisbane of the *New York World*, and Charles Edward Russell for the *New York Herald*.[32] Mott is correct about the New York law, and he was correct about the first legal access in 1892, which was the execution of Charles E. McElvaine. But Mott was incorrect about journalists not being present at

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28. "Far Worse Than Hanging," 1.
29. "The Time Machine, 1890. One Hundred Years Ago," *American Heritage.*
30. "Far Worse Than Hanging," 1.
31. Ibid.
32. Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism,* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1962), 488.

Kemmler's execution.[33] Joseph Pulitzer's *World* criticized electrocution and said hanging was a preferable method of capital punishment.[34] There was reported debate among those who witnessed the execution as to whether electrocution should be used again. Also, prisoners at Sing Sing were reported a couple of days later to be "greatly agitated" by the accounts of the execution. Also, the New York governor was reportedly "greatly displeased" by the bungled execution and had summoned prison warden Charles Durston to Albany.[35] Not everyone was dissatisfied. Durston said the execution had been "perfectly satisfactory," and the doctors who performed the autopsy said Kemmler's death was "apparently painless."[36]

British Reports Also Condemn Electrical Execution

The execution was denounced in London. Several newspapers commented in varying degrees of harshness. *The Standard* called it "a disgrace to humanity," and said, "We cannot believe that Americans will allow the electrical execution act to stand."[37] *The Times* of London also found the reports of the execution horrifying. A column in the 10 August 1890, edition said:

> It is to be hoped that we have heard the last of executions by electricity after all the sickening and horrible details given of the execution of Kemmler. Such a mode of putting a criminal to death is, to say the least of it, a shame, and a scandal to civilisation, and a repetition of such abominable torture should be sternly prohibited. Not only had the wretched prisoner to endure the death agony twice over, but it seems little short of barbarous that he should have had to undergo the previous

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33. The *Time's* report clearly states that of the twenty-five who witnessed the Kemmler execution, one was Frank W. Mack of the Associated Press. The New York law limited to twenty-seven the number who could attend, listing specific people and "twelve jurors." The list included no journalists. How the journalists got around the law was not stated in the news accounts, but near the end of a lengthy story on the day before the execution the *Times* reported: "At a late hour to-night Warden Durston finally concluded to permit representatives of the leading press associations to witness the execution..." Thus, perhaps it was Mack who was described by the paper as the newsman who said " 'For God's sake, kill him and have it over,' said a representative of one of the press associations, and then, unable to bear the strain, he fell on the floor in a dead faint." "Far Worse Than Hanging," 1.
34. "The Time Machine," *American Heritage,* 36.
35. "Aroused By Kemmler's Death," *New York Times,* 9 August 1890, 1. Also, the*Times* (London) reported that "six murderers under sentence of death in this city (New York City) are now reported to be much frightened, some of the newspaper accounts of the scene at Auburn having reached them. Two of them are bordering on insanity, and one, a Japanese, has applied to be beheaded." "Capital Punishment In New York," *Times* (London), 10 August 1890, 10.
36. "Far Worse Than Hanging," 1.
37. Ibid.

> agony and suffering of being 'fitted with the cap' and 'measured for the chair' a day or two beforehand.[38]

The Times predicted that "execution by electricity as performed at Auburn will be abandoned."[39] The paper said that the prisoners at Sing Sing were so frightened by newspaper accounts of the Kemmler execution that, "Two of them are bordering on insanity, and one, a Japanese, has applied to be beheaded." The Japanese apparently was Subihick Jugigo, who was electrocuted at Sing Sing on 7 July 1891.[40]

Although the *New York Times* itself had severely criticized the Kemmler execution, it could not bear the British criticism, and the *Times* reacted to the English outrage. A portion of a story that contained several items via cable from the *Times*' London correspondent criticized the London newspapers' response.

> English newspapers invested unprecedented sums of money in cable accounts of Kemmler's execution, and the Americans themselves can scarcely have taken greater interest in the ghastly episode than was exhibited here. . . . [The] experiment is wildly denounced as a wanton and flippant lapse into barbarism."[41]

Criticism of Electrocution Results in Denial of Access

The botched execution and the criticism caused the *New York Times* to briefly change its optimistic outlook on electrocution, although the *Times* is a curious study in separation of news and editorial comment. The news columns raised serious questions about the use of electrical executions for the next two years, while the editorial page, less than a year after Kemmler's execution, said, "We are inclined to the opinion that the use of the electric current for inflicting the death penalty is as civilized as any method that can be devised..."[42] And after four executions that the press was not allowed to witness, the paper confidently editorialized that the executions proved the success of electrocution, despite the fact that it soon became apparent that New York authorities were continuing to experiment with the method.[43] The difference may stem from the fact that at least one of the reporters had witnessed an electrocution, and covered the others, although not as a witness, while the editorial writers likely did not have the first-hand knowledge of electrocutions.

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38. "Echoes Of The Week," *Times* (London), 10 August 1890, 6.
39. "Execution by Electricity," *Times* (London), 7 August 1890, 3.
40. "Capital Punishment in New York," Times (London), 10 August 1890, 10.
41. See subhead "Kemmler's Fate," in a story titled "Russia's Aims With Jews," *New York Times,* 10 August 1890, 1.
42. Editorial, *New York Times,* 5 July 1891, 4.
43. Editorial, *New York Times,* 8 July 1891, 4.

The Kemmler execution also apparently taught New York authorities a lesson in management of information to the press. It seems obvious that reporters were banned from the subsequent five executions because of the press criticism about electrocution as an execution method, and not because of the existence of a state law barring the publication of details. (Such laws are not unknown today. Arkansas had such a law since 1913. It was widely ignored and was recently changed.) After all, the press had been allowed to attend the first electrocution, and it seems reasonable to surmise that reporters would have been allowed to attend subsequent executions, had things not gone so badly at the Kemmler execution, or had the press not severely criticized the state for adopting such a technology. Thus, access was directly tied to press reports about the new technology, and press criticism of a New York prison warden for the denial of access was a direct result of the press reporting about the lack of success of electrocution.

The next five men executed in New York by electrocution were killed under a strict cloak of secrecy. Four men were executed on 7 July 1891, at Sing Sing, the first executions since the Kemmler fiasco. The *Times* message about electrocution had changed from optimism to pointing out the experimental nature of electrocution:

> These executions are essentially experimental. Nobody knows it better than the advocates of the use of electricity in execution. It may be depended upon that if those advocates can so arrange it no such story will go out from Sing Sing as was told to the public from Auburn.[44]

And the *Times* was correct. Newspaper representatives were not permitted to witness because of the New York law that prohibited reporting of the details of an execution. The Sing Sing warden, a "Warden Brown," according to news reports, used the law to limit information to the public. He not only refused admittance to journalists, but also said he would put under oath all witnesses to not reveal one word of what they saw. Even the witnesses names were not released.[45]

The secrecy probably worked to Brown's detriment because the newspapers unmercifully attacked him. The *Times,* in an editorial comment in a news story, criticized Brown and electrocution, and mocked those responsible for using it to replace hanging:

> These executions are surrounded by an air of mystery and secrecy deeper than is warranted by any transaction that is legal. It looks on the face of things as if the queer coterie of influential cranks, scientific men, and politicians who created the electrical execution law are bound to have these executions

44. "Death Shadowing Them," *New York Times,* 6 July 1891, 1.
45. Ibid.

> go off to suit themselves. A repetition of the Kemmler affair, they know, would knock their pet measure into a cocked hat.[46]

For three straight days the execution story made the top right hand corner of the *Times's* first page. The newspaper raged in its news columns against Brown. Brown responded by using extraordinary tactics to ensure secrecy. He established a "dead line," near the prison. The line was a point beyond which journalists could not go or they would risk being shot. Brown had a patrol of armed men walk the line. The *Times* said the line was illegal because it included a public road, upon which they had the freedom to stand. However, a guard raised his weapon as if to shoot at journalists standing on the road and the journalists retreated. Then "a brace of prison dogs" were set loose on the news reporters.[47] The newsmen learned of the executions by a system of flag signals, devised by Brown. Journalists watched for colored flags to be raised to signal which of the four condemned had died. Each of the men was assigned a different color, and when the flag was hoisted on a pole on the cupola of the prison, the reporters knew which man was dead.[48]

The intense criticism did not cause Brown to back down. Five months later, when the state executed Martin D. Loppy, Brown again refused to admit journalists, although he said he wanted to, but the state law prohibited it. He again established a "dead line" across which journalists could not pass, at the risk of being shot.[49] Brown again would not reveal the time of the execution, and he used a similar system to notify journalists of the execution.

Loppy's execution apparently was a horrible mess. The *Times* managed to get reports from some of the witnesses, despite their having sworn not to reveal anything. The *Times* reported the execution was "quite as revolting as was that of Kemmler." It described Loppy's death in gory, intricate detail, and said any exaggerations in the reports were Warden Brown's fault because of his efforts to keep information from the public.[50]

Reporters Gain Access; Criticism of Electrocution Continues

Shortly after Loppy's execution, Assemblyman Myer J. Stein introduced an amendment to the law, which passed. It allowed reporters to witness executions and to report the details. Interestingly enough, once permitted entry, the stories moved off of the front page. McElvaine's execution on 8 February 1892, was the first legally witnessed by reporters. Being allowed access did not lessen the criticism of electrocution. The *Times* also questioned the scientific nature of an electrocution:

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46. "They Still Await Death," *New York Times,* 7 July 1891, 1.
47. Ibid.
48. "Four Men Die By the Law," *New York Times,* 8 July 1891, 1.
49. "Loppy Must Die This Week." *New York Times,* 7 December 1891, 1.
50. "Gov. Hill's Sixth Victim," A drop head read: "Scenes Of Horror In Sing Sing Prison," *New York Times,* 8 December 1891, 1.

> An execution by any method is an awe-inspiring ordeal for a man to pass through, but an execution by electricity, according to the alleged scientific method which this State has adopted is declared by men who have witnessed it and have also witnessed the work of the gallows, the guillotine, and the gun to be infinitely the most awful.[51]

Also, Edison continued to be in the news regarding executions in New York because the state had a difficult time making the new death technology work. State officials experimented in several ways, including attaching the electrodes to different parts of the condemned prisoners' bodies. On 9 February 1892, the state executed Charles E. McElvaine, the seventh person to die in New York's electric chair. The execution was not a quick success, although it was not as bad as Kemmler's had been. In this execution the electrical currents were sent through McElvaine's hands, and two lengthy jolts were required to kill him — the first for 50 seconds and a second of 36 seconds. The method of establishing contact through the hands between two water-filled jars was suggested by Edison, among others, and the press criticized him for his suggestion. The *Times* reported that, "The amperage record shows that Mr. Edison was entirely mistaken in recommending that the current be applied through the hands."[52]

One doctor who witnessed McElvaine's execution said he thought the method was more "brutalizing" than it was "brutal." New York Assemblyman Stein said seeing the execution converted him to belief that capital punishment should not be used, and the newspaper said he rushed back to Albany to introduce a bill for repeal of the capital punishment law in New York.[53] The bill failed and the executions continued.

Following the botched attempt to execute McElvaine by attaching the electrodes to his hands, the state returned to attaching them to the forehead and calf in the next execution, that of condemned killer Jeremiah Cotto, who was executed 28 March 1892. The state also used five short twelve-second jolts instead of long periods of electrical current, as it had done with McElvaine. Ten journalists witnessed the execution, and the news reports are illustrative of how little still was known about the effects of electrical execution, despite seven men having died by the method. News reports said the "rush of the electric current through the body heated it very much." One physician who examined Cotto shortly after the execution said Cotto's eyeball was fused "like a ball of hot glass." The *Times*'s report said:

> The body was heated through and this caused considerable comment on the part of the physicians. Little has been noted in respect to the other victims of the death chair. The bulb of a thermometer was placed on Cotto's thigh some minutes after

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51. "Two Shocks Were Needed," *New York Times,* 9 February 1982, 9.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.

> the body had been taken from the chair, and the temperature was 160°. The effect of this great heat on the blood and nerves will be examined carefully.[54]

Electrocution Finally Accepted by the Press as Humane

Despite the intense criticism of electrocutions and of the secrecy surrounding many of the first of them, by May 1892, at the execution of Joseph L. Tice, electrocution came to be accepted by the press as a more humane method of capital punishment than hanging. The use of short jolts satisfied the news reporters that "there was no evidence of suffering." And, Dr. George E. Fell of Buffalo, New York, who had encouraged the use of electrocution, and apparently was the designer of the first electric chair,[55] and who had witnessed the Kemmler execution, said of the Tice execution:

> The execution of Tice could not be improved upon. The frequent short contacts are undoubtedly the best method. There was nothing revolting in this case. As compared with the Kemmler case, this was the more satisfactory. In the execution of Tice there was absolutely no reflex movements from beginning to end, aside from the rigidity of the body, produced by the making and breaking of the current. I was one of the first to advocate electrical execution, and after seeing this electrocution I am satisfied that the grounds I assumed were correct. There is no method comparable to it, which this case and also that of Kemmler demonstrates.[56]

Summary of the Reporting of the Change to Electrocution

New York Times reports at the turn of the century about the first electrical executions show almost wild enthusiasm about the new technology and its possibilities for a more humane execution method, but that enthusiasm changed to become cynical and critical when the execution was botched. Reports after the execution concerning the technology caused state authorities to clamp down on the release of information, and to take extreme steps to prevent reporters from having access to the next five executions. Reports about the executions illustrate how little was known about the new technology of electricity. Reports of the executions were vivid and emotional — these were characteristics of the period, especially with stories such as executions, where the public could not witness and the press provided "'news as surrogate for primary contacts,' a substitute for the village corner, and it (the press) gave emotional

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54. "Five Currents Killed Him," *New York Times,* 29 March 1892, 9.
55. Denno, "Is Electrocution An Unconstitutional Method of Execution?" 576-577.
56. "Tice Died Painlessly," *New York Times,* 19 May 1892, 3.

color to urban life. . ."[57] Also, the executions in New York were closely scrutinized because New York was one of the nation's media centers, and there was intense competition for news among the newspapers at the turn of the century.

The Move to the Gas Chamber

In 1924, Nevada became the first state to shift the method of execution to the gas chamber. The first person to die in the chamber was Gee Jon, who was Chinese. He was executed 8 February 1924, and press reports about the humaneness of the execution, both before and after, were generally laudatory.

On the day of Jon's execution two cats were put to death to test the system, and the animals, wire service reports said, died within fifteen seconds, which was taken as a good sign.[58]

A *New York Times* wire story account of the execution emphasized the speed and the humane way that Jon died. "Physicians and scientists who attended the execution were unanimous in pronouncing it a swift and painless method. Several of them said they thought it the most merciful form yet devised."[59]

The doctors attending the execution said Jon was unconscious after the first breath of the gas and said that he felt no pain. How they knew what he was feeling was not stated. Press reports said Jon's head nodded up and down for six minutes, but the doctors said this was a "muscular reaction after death."[60]

A *New York Times* editorial criticized Nevada's decision to switch from hanging to lethal gas. The *Times* said that execution by gas might not be cruel, but it was "sufficiently unusual to raise a doubt about its constitutionality." The editorial is interesting inasmuch as the attitude expressed about the use of lethal gas, given New York's horrendous early experience with the electric chair and the aforementioned criticism of electrocution only some thirty-five years earlier. Of course, electrocution was equally as "unusual" when it was introduced as the most humane method of killing condemned prisoners. The *Times* said it wished Nevada had not chosen "to destroy her murderers by administering to them the most terrible of all known poisons."[61] Cyanide gas was what the *Times* described.

Stories Prior to the Arizona Gas Executions

Arizona, another sparsely populated western state, followed Nevada and switched its method of execution from hanging to lethal gas in 1933. The change probably was precipitated by the news reports about the horrible

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57. Marion T. Marzolf *Civilizing Voices: American Press Criticism 1880-1950* (New York: Longman, 1991), 35.
58. "Nevada Will Execute Slayer By Gas Today," *New York Times,* 8 February 1924, 4.
59. "Gas Kills Convict Almost Instantly," *New York Times,* 9 February 1924, 15.
60. Ibid.
61. "A Change Far From Attractive," *New York Times,* 9 February 1924, 12.

execution of Eva Dugan, the first and only woman ever executed under state authority in Arizona. Dugan, hanged 21 February 1930, was decapitated at the execution. One newspaper said in its lead paragraph that she had been "beheaded by the state of Arizona."[62] Arizona abandoned hanging and adopted lethal gas in 1933. The first lethal gas executions were in 1934, and there was little discussion in a major newspaper, the *Phoenix Gazette*, about the method. Fred Hernandez, nineteen, and his brother, Manuel, eighteen, were the first to die in Arizona's gas chamber, and they also were the first dual execution by lethal gas in the United States, although California and Missouri later followed suit with dual lethal gas executions.[63] More emphasis was placed in the Arizona stories prior to the execution on what the condemned brothers ate, especially their fondness for watermelon.[64]

Post-execution Stories Praise Method as Quick and Painless

However, on the day of the execution the message the readers got was that the deaths of the brothers was quick and painless. A banner headline on the front page of the *Gazette* read "Hernandez Boys Pay Penalty," and a deck headline read, "One Whiff Of Lethal Gas Kills 2 Slayers."[65] The story was somewhat confusing about the speed of the deaths because early in the story it said, "One whiff of the lethal gas and Manuel and Fred Hernandez bid 'adios' to this life . . ." And a few paragraphs later the reporter said that the Hernandez brothers died within ten seconds. However, the very next sentence said Manuel died in two minutes, Fred in three minutes, and then went on to say that it was eight minutes before "reflex actions ceased."[66]

The *Gazette*, in an editorial about two years later, praised the use of lethal gas as being humane. The newspaper pointed out that four methods of execution had been used in the United States on a single day — Arizona had used the gas chamber, Utah the firing squad, California had hanged a prisoner, and Texas had electrocuted a prisoner. The *Gazette* said that of the methods lethal gas was accepted as the most humane because the condemned were put "to sleep." (This phrase is exactly the one used today by some state officials — and some reporters—to describe lethal injection.) The newspaper said hanging had virtually gone out of style.[67] The editorial ran just three days before reports of a highly publicized hanging in Arizona of Earl Gardner, a member of the Apache tribe. Because Gardner was convicted of two murders on a reservation, he was hanged under federal authority. Whether lethal gas was in fact "humane," it certainly appeared so in comparison to Gardner's hanging, which was a terrible

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62. "Eva Dugan Dies On Gallows," *Phoenix Gazette,* 21 February 1930, 1.
63. "Hernandez Brothers Are Resigned To Fate," *Phoenix Gazette,* 4 July 1934, 1.
64. Ibid. See also, "60 Hours, Six Melons, Then 2 Boys Will Die," *Phoenix Gazette,* 3 July 1934, sec. 2, 1; "Chicken Dinner For Condemned Arizona Killers," *Phoenix Gazette,* 4 July 1934, 1.
65. *Phoenix Gazette,* 6 July 1934, 1.
66. Ibid.
67. "Four Types Of Legal Death," *Phoenix Gazette,* 11 July 1936, 4.

mess. A page one banner headline in the *Gazette* about the hanging read, "Indian Strangles Slowly On Gallows When Noose Slips." As Gardner fell through the trap, which apparently had faulty design, the noose slipped up under his chin. The fall failed to break his neck and it took him about 30 minutes to die by strangulation. Toward the end of the ordeal, Gardner was pulled back up, the rope adjusted, then he was shoved back through the trap to die.[68] With Mrs. Dugan's decapitation during her hanging somewhat fresh on the minds of Arizonans, and the terrible botch of the Gardner hanging, lethal gas must have indeed seemed humane.

Thus, although press reports about lethal gas executions in Nevada and Arizona were not so pronounced in exhuberance as were those in New York about electrical execution, there was considerable optimism about the technological advance. Most states that adopted lethal gas — and there were not many because hanging or electrical execution remained the most popular methods — did not follow Nevada's lead until the late 1930s. One of the most prominent and heavily populated of the states was California. The fascination with science was more evident in reports in the *San Francisco Examiner*.

California: Optimism Before the Execution

Robert Lee Cannon and Albert Kessell were the first to die in California's gas chamber. They were executed 2 December 1938 at San Quentin.

Not everyone was enamored of the change to the gas chamber, and the *Examiner*, to its credit, reported this. San Quentin Warden Court Smith said he thought the gas chamber would be more cruel than hanging because, as the newspaper reported, "The trouble with this form of execution is time. Not the actual time it takes to kill a man, but the time required to get him into the death chamber, strapped into a chair, to prepare him and the chamber for execution."[69] Smith had witnessed gas chamber executions in Nevada and what he had seen, the newspaper reported, led him to dissaude the California governor from signing a bill six years earlier to introduce the gas chamber into California.[70] Despite Smith's hesitancy, the newspaper accounts were generally optimistic about the benefits of technological advance. The *Examiner* reported that the state had "put aside the frank simplicity of rope and gallows-trap" and would begin "killing its killers with the scientific complexities of a death-machine."[71] The newspaper went into great detail about the technology of the chamber, reporting to the enth degree the features of the chamber and how it would work. It said the state:

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68. *Phoenix Gazette,* 13 July, 1. See also, "Apache Is Buried Near Wife, Babe," *Phoenix Gazette,* 14 July 1936, 1.
69. "Execution By Gas Rehearsed at San Quentin," *San Francisco Examiner,* 1 December 1938, 10.
70. "Two Will Die Today in New Gas Chamber," *San Francisco Examiner,* 2 December 1938, 1.
71. Ibid.

> At a cost of some $5000, . . . has acquired a shiny, new apparatus of staggering ingenuity, a device which cleverly combines the discoveries of the physicist with the findings of the chemist so that the most poisonous of poison gases may enter the human system in deadly quantities.[72]

The newspaper said the men would die "quickly and easily" unless there was some "ghastly mistake, some error in the nice computations and adroit contriving that went into the creation of this machine. . ."[73] The newspaper went on to say that doctors would take the condemneds' heartbeats "by a stethoscopic arrangement ingeniously threaded through the walls [of the chamber]."[74] Thus, the chamber was swift, humane, and seemingly a marvel of modern science. But, Warden Smith predicted that the execution would "not be a pretty sight" for the witnesses.[75]

The legislature had ordered the shift to the gas chamber because it thought gas was "less brutal than hemp," would result in less suffering by the condemned and would be "less distressing" for those who performed the execution.[76]

Disillusionment With the Change to Gas: Post-execution Stories

The headlines the day after the executions tell the story. The *Examiner* blared: "2 Killers Gassed; Chorus of Protest Arises at Ordeal."[77] Deck headlines read: "Witnesses Condemn Cruelty of Method," and "Horror." The lead on the story read, "California's new death-factory went into capacity production yesterday and turned out two of the neatest corpses San Quentin's executioners have ever seen."[78] The report said the two men died "before the eyes of forty-five unenthusiastic witnesses."

> The byproducts were undisguised feelings of revulsion, and frank declarations by prison officials and physicians that hanging is a quicker, more merciful method of execution, and widespread suspicions that the State's new lethal gas chamber is a chamber of horror.[79]

The newspaper's description started on page one and jumped to a lengthy, blow-by-blow description — complete with a picture of the death chamber, sans Kessell and Cannon. The newspaper said it took twelve minutes for Cannon to

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72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. *San Francisco Examiner,* 3 December 1938, 1.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.

die, and it took fifteen minutes and thirty seconds for Kessell. The pair were described by the paper as straining against the straps, gasping and coughing. The report said some believed one of the men screamed, but the guards said that was a noise from a check valve releasing pressure from the chamber.[80]

After the execution there was an outcry, just as was seen after the first electrical execution in New York, although not as pronounced. California State Assemblyman Chester Gannon of Sacramento said he wanted to witness a gas chamber execution, but that he was considering introducing execution by firing squad as a more humane method of execution than the chamber.[81] The *Examiner* said that, "Those who saw [it] said, almost to a man, that death by the rope must be merciful compared with the death they witnessed through the thick glass windows of the lethal chamber." San Francisco health director J.C. Geiger, the newspaper reported, "denied vigorously that the men had died painlessly." Not everyone agreed. Sacramento County Sheriff Don Cox said he thought gas was preferable "because it seemed more humane and less subject to a slip-up."[82]

Others apparently agreed, because California continued to use the gas chamber fifty-four years later.

Reports From Missouri: Gas Effective, Efficient

Press reports from Missouri, which adopted the use of the gas chamber in 1938, also emphasized the speed and humanness of gas executions. The state had adopted the gas chamber and had moved executions to Jefferson City because of public and press indignation about reports of a county fair, celebratory attitude at public hangings, held in the counties where the crimes had been committed.

The reports about the first gas chamber executions in the state differed greatly in detail and in specificity in Missouri's two major media centers, St. Louis and Kansas City. There was little reporting in the Kansas City papers about the first two men executed by gas in Missouri. The St. Louis newspaper staffed the executions, and the Kansas City papers relied on wire service reports. Missouri had two chairs in its chamber, as did California and Arizona, and executed the men together.

A page one headline in the *Post-Dispatch*, above the fold, said, "Two Executed In New State Gas Chamber," and a drop head read, "Method Used First Time at Jefferson City for Murderers Works Quickly and Efficiently." The story made much of the fact that the two men were unconscious within forty-five seconds after the gas was released into the chamber, and were dead within four minutes.[83] The newspaper had said in an earlier story that the gas chamber had been substituted for the gallows because it was "more humane and more in line

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80. Ibid.
81. "Bill To Halt Gas Killings Proposed," A deck headline read "Gannon May Urge Firing Squads," *San Francisco Examiner,* 3 December 1938, 3.
82. Ibid.
83. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* 4 March 1938, 1.

with modern penal facilities."[84] The newspaper, which today is adamantly opposed to capital punishment, perhaps moreso than any other American newspaper, was not opposed to the penalty in 1938. In fact, in an editorial following the third execution the *Post-Dispatch* breathed a sigh of editorial relief at the passing of hangings, especially public hangings, in Missouri. And the editorial applauded the humane method of the new chamber.

> The state exacted its demands quickly, without pain to the convicted men and in the presence of only twenty-five persons on each occasion. Thus passes from Missouri the county seat hanging, with its crowds of the morbidly curious amid holiday surroundings. Good riddance![85]

The *Kansas City Star* reported that a "lethal gas expert," not named in the story, would assist Missouri officials at the first executions. This was a fact not reported in St. Louis. The expert, the newspaper said, had assisted in gas executions in other states. (Bringing in experts to aid in the smooth transition to new death technology is a somewhat common process and lends scientific authority to the changes. Maryland did the same in 1994 when it shifted to lethal injection.) The newspaper assured readers that, "One whif (sic) of the gas curling up through the perforated chairs produces death."[86] The next day's edition had headlines saying, "Negroes Die Without Pain In State's New Lethal Chamber," and "Fumes Arise And Men Are Made Unconscious At Once And Are Dead In About Five Minutes." The newspaper reported there was "no pain or struggle."[87] One day later, in a case that attracted much press attention because the condemned's real name was in question and little was known about him, a third man was put to death in Jefferson City's new chamber, and again the headlines stressed the humane way he died.[88] The execution also was played on the front page in St. Louis.[89]

Mississippi and Maryland — Little Fanfare

By 1955 and 1957, when Mississippi and Maryland, respectively, joined those states using the gas chamber, the Mississippi execution merited a bare brief mention in a United Press story that ran in the nearby *Memphis*

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84. "Three Murderers To Die In State's Gas Chamber," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* 3 March 1938, 11A.
85 "The Hanging Passes in Missouri," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* 5 March 1938, 4.
86. "Gas Death Cell Ready," *Kansas City Star,* 3 March 1938, 2.
87. *Kansas City Star,* 4 March 1938, 14.
88. "Boyer Dies In Silence," A deck head read: "Fumes Are Quick And Painless, Unconsciousness Coming In 35 Seconds and Death in 3 or 4 Minutes," *Kansas City Star,* 5 March 1938, 1.
89. "Third Man Put To Death By Gas At State Prison," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* 5 March 1938, 1.

Commercial-Appeal. Of course, lethal gas had been used in other states for more than thirty years, so it was not a new technology.

The *Commercial-Appeal* carried the UPI report, and in the fifth paragraph of the story it said, "Gallego, before taking the short walk to the chamber, which was used for the first time . . ." That was the extent of the mention of the chamber.[90]

In Maryland, the move to the gas chamber was much the same as the Mississippi reports in Associated Press reports in The *Washington Post and Times Herald.* A straightforward, short story the day prior to the execution was buried inside the B section. The story said that Eddie Lee Daniels would become the first to die in Maryland's new gas chamber. It gave a clinical account of what would happen: "A condemned man is strapped into a metal chair and cyanide pellets are dropped into a sulphuric acid mixture. Unconsciousness results in about thirty seconds and death in about six minutes."[91]

The execution itself merited only wire coverage in the *Post* the next day, and was again direct and unembellished. The story said the gas pellets were dropped into cyanide at 10:10 p.m., Daniels's last movements were seen at 10:17 p.m., and he was pronounced dead at 10:23 p.m.[92]

In 1994, U.S. District Court Judge Marilyn Hall Patel ruled the California gas chamber was unconstitutional because it was cruel and unusual punishment. She said it deprived the condemned of air and was similar to strangulation or drowning, and resulted in intense pain. The ruling was appealed by California. If the ruling stands, California will execute by lethal injection, which was added as an option in 1993. Arizona, North Carolina, and Mississippi still have gas chambers, but the latter uses the chamber only for inmates convicted prior to 1984.[93]

Summary of the Change to Lethal Gas

Reports of the change in execution technology to lethal gas were in most cases optimistic prior to the executions. The technology was not criticized so heavily after the executions, even in the case of botched first executions, or executions that were not as quick and clean as the press had been led to believe. For example, in 1938 there was reporting, but little criticism, when Byron King's lethal gas execution in Missouri was delayed forty minutes because two stone jars were broken in which attendants were preparing the acid solution into

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90. "Gallego Repents, Dies With Smile In Gas Chamber," *Memphis Commercial -Appeal,* 4 March 1955, 3.
91. "Daniels to Die in 1st Gas Execution," *Washington Post and Times Herald,* 27 June 1957, B12.
92. "Daniels Goes To Death in Gas Chamber," *Washington Post and Times Herald,* 29 June 1957, B1.
93. "Ruling could close doors of San Quentin's gas chamber," *Jonesboro* (Arkansas) *Sun,* 6 October 1994, 3.

which the cyanide pellets would drop.[94] Similarly, when it took ten minutes for Dock Booker to die by lethal gas in Missouri in 1955, the state's straightforward explanation that a faulty release mechanism was to blame was accepted without comment, although the length of the execution was noted in the headline.[95]

Also, the first state to use the gas chamber was Nevada, a far west, sparsely populated state, not one of the major media centers of the country, such as had been the case in New York's shift to electrical executions. Nevada was admitted to the Union in 1864, but still today has very few people outside of Las Vegas and Reno. Arizona was not admitted to the Union until 1912, and in 1934 had little population. The gas chamber had been in use for fourteen years in Nevada and four years in Arizona before it was adopted in the more heavily populated state of California. Thus gas executions did not receive the intense coverage initially that electrocution did. Also, not as many states adopted the technology.

'So subtle, so gentle': Lethal Injection

On 8 December 1982, Charles Brooks Jr. became the first man executed by lethal injection. This time the scientific innovation was not so enthusiastically accepted prior to the execution, especially in newspapers such as The *New York Times*, and The *Washington Post*. The *Times* is noted for its science coverage, and the *Post* has been opposed to capital punishment in recent years. In a story about the Brooks execution the *Times* said: "The use of lethal injection has been widely urged as a 'humane' way of carrying out the death sentence. However, many physicians have protested that it is a violation of medical ethics to use drugs meant to save lives to end lives."[96] The *Times* report also pointed out that there was a difference of opinion about whether Brooks's death was painless. Witnesses said he "yawned and wheezed, and that was all," but others said he "gasped and moved his stomach."[97] Whatever the case, the scientific technology aspect of the execution was clear. A medical technician was reported to have handled the execution, "on the other side of a wall through which tubes had been passed."[98]

The *Times*, in a related story, outlined some of the issues for readers:

> The execution early this morning of a convicted murderer by injection of a lethal dose of anesthetics, the first such execution in the United States, today sharpened the debate over

94. "Killer Executed By Gas, Kidnapper Gets Court Stay," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* 4 November 1938, 1.
95. "Faulty Gas Chamber Drags Out Execution," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* 1 April 1955, 7A.
96. "Technician Executes Murderer in Texas By Lethal Injection," *New York Times,* December, 1982, 1.
97. Ibid.
98. Ibid.

> the moral validity of the death penalty and over whether it can be administered in a 'humane' manner.[99]

Henry Schwarzchild, then director of the capital punishment project of the American Civil Liberties Union, denounced in the story what he called a "high-tech" execution, and said that the focus should not be on the method of execution, but should be on the killing.[100] This same point was made twelve years later by *The Washington Post* when Maryland executed John Thanos on 16 May 1994. The *Post* said of the Thanos execution, and of the lethal injection execution of two inmates in Arkansas at about the same time, "Perhaps as productivity of this type increases, group executions could become the norm and then no one would have to focus on the individual being put to death at all."[101]

Thanos's execution was by lethal injection, and was the first execution in Maryland since 1961, and its first by lethal injection. The state, according to the *Post*, pushed through a lethal injection bill in March 1994 to make executions more acceptable by making them appear to be more humane.[102] And, a column pointed out that Thanos actually had to appear in court to decide how to die, thus emphasizing the technological aspect of the execution.[103]

The *Post*, in a bitterly satirical editorial following the execution, said the Thanos execution had been described by one witness (*Associated Press* reporter Sandra Skowron) as "so gentle, so subtle." The *Post* noted that the executioners even swabbed Thanos's leg with alcohol before inserting the needle through which the deadly poisons would flow. The swabbing was to prevent infection. Thanos's leg had to be used because he was a drug user and the veins in his arm were unsuitable, the *Post* said. The *Post* said the witnesses and officials who commented on how well Thanos's execution had gone "might have been talking about an efficient example of opening a new post office, or staging a medium length parade."[104] Thus the *Post*, by pointing out in a satirical way the efficiency of the technology, drew attention away from the technical aspect and drew attention more toward the moral issues. The efficiency and humaneness of lethal injection seem to be cited often by execution officials. In Missouri officials described lethal injection as being like getting Pentothal at the dentist's office, or going to sleep.[105] However, in the case of the *Times* and the *Post*, the state's description of what was to happen was not as faithfully reported as had been the case for the introduction of electrocution and lethal gas.

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99. "Execution by Injection Stirs Fear and Sharpens Debate," *New York Times*, 8 December 1982, 28.
100. Ibid.
101. "Ho Hum, Another Execution," *Washington Past*, 22 May 1994, C6.
102. "Dozens Protest in Md. As Thanos Nears Death," *Washington Post*, 16 May 1994, D1.
103. Tom Russo, "The Thanos Case and Our Collective Conscience," *Washington Post*, 15 May 1994, C8.
104. "Ho Hum, Another Execution," C6.
105. Trombley, *The Execution Protocol*, 115-116.

And, it was precisely the lack of drama or trauma associated with lethal injection executions, and the efficient clinical procedure that led Schwarzchild to comment after a Missouri execution by lethal injection:

> I talked this morning with a young lady who was a witness at Mercer's execution. . . . She didn't find the lethal injection a very traumatic or dramatic experience. It's designed precisely to that end — to make it easier on your stomach — and that's the reason why I find that disgusting.
>
> The shocking thing about it was that it wasn't shocking. She didn't find it particularly traumatic; the next time she should try to find an electrocution or a hanging and see how she likes that.
>
> The notion of killing people efficiently is all too reminiscent of the execution camps.[106]

Discussion

The newspaper press reported in earlier years on the introduction of new death penalty technology with a degree of awe, and with almost unquestioning acceptance prior to the first uses of the technologies. Reports at about the end of the nineteeth century when electrocution came into use, and reports in the middle 1930s, when some states shifted to lethal gas, show a press that initially enthusiastically accepted the official assurance that the methods would be more humane. But in the case of electrocution, particularly, the press reacted with almost wild speculation after some botched executions, predicting that the method would cease to be used. Those predictions, part of the news stories, proved to be erroneous. And the skepticism about the technology quickly died down as the states persisted in use of the technologies and improved the techniques over time, or took steps to assure secrecy. The New York experience with electrocution is the most obvious example.

Similarly, the use of lethal gas as a quick, humane way of executing prisoners was not questioned prior to the executions, nor after, except in California. The first states to adopt lethal gas were in the sparsely populated far west, and little attention was paid to the executions. In California, a more heavily populated area, the press reporting prior to the first use of lethal gas, and the reporting afterward, seems to fit the pattern that was seen in New York with electrocution — unbridled optimism changing to deep skepticism followed by acceptance.

The press of the 1980s and 1990s was more skeptical about the introduction of the capital punishment technology than the press of the 1890s and 1930s, and, importantly, the coverage shifted from an almost exclusive focus on the method of execution when a new technology was introduced to a more

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106. Tom Uhlenbrock, "'Their Time Has Come,'" *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* 8 January 1989, 1B.

balanced coverage that included the morality of the execution. Several reasons for this are possible. In 1890 and 1930, newspapers such as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* did not have clearly defined editorial policies opposing capital punishment. Not as much was known about the deterrent effects — or lack thereof — of capital punishment. Also, science writing was either virtually nonexistent or poorly developed in such newspapers. Technological innovations must have seemed marvelous. A good example of how little science apparently had progressed is from the reports of the first electrocution when the "imminent scientists" were surprised that they could not do an instant autopsy on the body because it was so hot, and the fact that even after seven electrocutions in New York the physicians attending at the autopsies were amazed at the body temperature, when it was finally noticed. It should be no surprise that the press would also have little reason to question the technological innovation, although the press was quick to condemn those legislators who voted for the change, but then were just as quick to accept the change once it seemed to "work well."

The press reports also must be looked at in the context of the times. In the 1890s when electrocution was adopted the press was in the Yellow Journalism era. Reporting was more sensational, and "literary journalism" was more in evidence. After the American Civil War the press had adopted tactics for marketing the news and for more exciting reporting that were in great evidence in execution stories, such as the story as a drama, and the events-centered story.[107]

The country was undergoing a dramatic industrial and demographic transformation. The United States was on the threshold of becoming a world power. Immigration brought xenophobia in some instances, and capital punishment was generally much more accepted, and in some instances the two went hand-in-hand.[108] Also, the United States had gradually been moving away from the concept of bodily punishment, but this movement was in its infancy and it began in the Northeast and spread elsewhere, with the Southern states being the slowest to reject such things as whippings, hangings and the like.[109]

During the mid 1930s the country was in the midst of the Great Depression. Executions were more frequent during this time than at any time in recent American history. With the economy being so bad, neither the public nor the press seemed particularly concerned with capital punishment as it relates to rights of defendants. The high point for the movement to more humane punishment in the United States probably came in the 1950s and 1960s.[110] It was at this time that the country was closest to abolishing capital punishment. There was an increased emphasis at various levels in the country on the self

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107. Hazel Dicken-Garcia. *Journalistic Standards in Nineteenth-Century America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), see especially 63, 90, 93, 176-172, and 203-221.

108. For one such example, see Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

109. See Lawrence M. Friedman, *Crime and Punishment in American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), ch. 4.

110. Ibid., 305.

instead of the community, and this was reflected in an emphasis on human rights and on reform of the justice system.[111] But increasing crime rates (or the perception that crime is increasing) later led to increased public support for capital punishment, something that continues to this day, although crime rates in the United States have declined.[112] Some critics charge that the way the press reports on crime gives the public the perception that crime is increasing,[113] and that certainly could lead to public demands for harsher penalties, including the death penalty.

News reports about the introduction of lethal injection by the states reflect the "scientific" nature of the method. It is reported as being clinical, swift, almost painless, and efficient. But the press of the 1990s is decidely different in relation to the introduction of this technology, because the stories seemed to more often be balanced with other stories, or information from other sources, that challenged the technology, or the morality of its use. This could partly be because the medical profession has in some states protested against state laws requiring a doctor to be present to declare the condemned dead, saying such participation violates the Hippocratic oath.

The skepticism of the press in the 1980s about the introduction of lethal injection as a technological advance may be explained by an increase in the knowledge about the effects of capital punishment in general, by the backing away from capital punishment by all western democracies except the United States, by generally better educated reporters in regard to technology, science and the politics of capital punishment, by editorial policies on some of the major newspapers in opposition to the death penalty, by more "objective" news reporting, by what some have said is an increased skepticism about government information in the post-Watergate era, and by a general maturing of the press.

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111. Ibid., see ch. 19-20. For discussion in areas other than capital punishment, see for example, Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1985); Clifford G. Christians, John P. Ferré, and P. Mark Fackler, *Good News: Social Ethics & the Press* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); and Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Democracy on Trial* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

112. See, for example, David Zucchino, Knight-Ridder Tribune News Service, "Violence in America: Same old story, same old rhetoric," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette,* 13 November 1994, sec. J, 1.

113. See, for example, Doris A. Graber, *Crime News and the Public* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980); Roy Edward Lotz, *Crime and the American Press* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1991); Richard V. Ericson, Patricia M. Baranek, Janet B.L. Chan *Representing Order: Crime, Law, and Justice in the News Media* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); J. Edward Gerald, *News of Crime* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983); Linda S. Lichter and S. Robert Lichter, *Prime Time Crime* (Washington, D.C.: Media Institute, 1983); Allen E. Liska and William Baccaglini, "Feeling Safe by Comparison: Crime in Newspapers," *Social Problems 37* (1990): 360-374; Garrett J. O'Keefe and Kathleen Reid-Nash, "Crime News and Real-World Blues," *Communication Research 14* (1987): 147-163; Ray Surette, "Media Trials," *Journal of Criminal Justice 17* (1989): 293-308.

For example, in regard to the deterrent or brutalizing effects of capital punishment, the first studies done about the effects of publicity of executions were done in the 1930s. Those conclusions, and conclusions prior to that, were based on writings by philosophers such as Beccaria or Bentham, or on comparisons of homicide rates in states that had the death penalty with those that did not. Several studies since 1975 about the deterrent or brutalization effects of execution publicity have proved inconclusive, although they probably lean toward the idea that publicity has little deterrent effect.[114] Despite this, legislators and some journalists continue to call for televised or otherwise public executions as a means of deterring others.[115]

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114. See, for example, Isaac Ehrlich, "The Deterrent Effect of Capital Punishment: A Question of Life and Death," *American Economic Review 65:* 397-417; Steven Sack, "Publicized Executions and Homicide, 1950-1980," *American Sociological Review 52* (1987): 532-540. Sack, "Execution Publicity and Homicide in South Carolina," *Sociological Quarterly 32* (1990): 599-611; William C. Bailey, "Murder, Capital Punishment, and Television: Execution Publicity and Homicide Rates," *American Sociological Review 55* (1990): 628-633; Bailey and Ruth D. Peterson, "Murder and Capital Punishment: A Monthly Time-Series Analysis of Execution Publicity," *American Sociological Review 54* (1989): 722-743; David R. King, "The Brutalization Effect: Execution Publicity and the Incidence of Homicide in South Carolina, *Social Forces 57:* 683-687; Steven F. Messner, "Television Violence and Violent Crime: An Aggregate Analysis," *Social Problems 33* (1986): 218-235.

115. The legal and ethical questions about press camera access to executions is beyond the scope of this article. However, the entire debate about whether executions should be televised is a good example of this. This debate has been particularly intense since California executed Robert Alton Harris in 1991, but it dates back earlier in the courts, to 1977. See, for example, Wendy Lesser, *Pictures At An Execution: An Inquiry into the Subject of Murder* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995); Patrick D. Filbin, "Pictures at an Execution," *Thomas M. Cooley Law Review 9* (1991): 137-160; R.C. Patrick, "Hiding Death," *New England Journal on Criminal and Civil Confinement 178* (1992): 117-145; Jeff Angeja, "Televising California's Death Penalty: Is There a Constitutional Right to Broadcast Executions?" *Hastings Law Journal 43* (1992): 1489-1516; G. Santamarina, "The Case for Televised Executions," *Cardozo Arts and Entertainment Law Journal 11* (1992): 101-143; William B. Turner and Beth S. Brinkman, "Televising Executions: The First Amendment Issues." *Santa Clara Law Review 32* (1992): 1135-1162; D.A. Drobny, "Death TV: Media Access to Executions Under the First Amendment," *Washington University Law Quarterly 70* (1992): 1179-1204; B. Schwartz, "Death TV? Is there a press right of access to news that allows television of executions?" *Tulsa Law Journal 30* (1994): 305-353; J.D. Bessler, "Televised executions and the Constitution: recognizing a first amendment right of access to state executions," *Federal Communications Law Journal 45* (1993): 355-435. In colonial times and in early America, executions were to serve a pedagogical purpose and were held in public for that reason. But, upper and middle class sensibilities, riots, drunkenness, and destruction of property as a result caused the executions to be moved from public view. See, Masur, *Rites of Execution.* Some still clamor for a return to public hangings. See, for example, "Paragould lawmaker offers bill on hangings,"

Some of the things that might make the press more skeptical, such as more "objective" reporting, or a general disinterest in news about capital punishment, might also make the reports more sterile. Gene Miller, whose reporting on one death row case won a Pulitzer Prize for the *Miami Herald*, said, in reference to "objective" press reporting about capital punishment and the condemned, "I sometimes think that if the twentieth Century press could report on the crucifixion of Christ, the second paragraph would be an explanation from Pontius Pilate."[116] Also, one must wonder why readers in Florida read headlines after the Jessie Tafero electrical execution that vividly described the horror of the badly botched execution,[117] while readers of wire service accounts in, for example, the *New York Times* read nothing about the botch the day after it occurred, except for the sterile report that it took three jolts of electricity to kill Tafero. Most readers probably get most of their news about executions from the wire service reports.

Few changes resulted from press reports. The press reports about the first electrocution seem without doubt to have led to closure of the next five electrocution executions, and pressure from the press seems to have influenced passage of a law opening New York's executions to press coverage. But calls for abolishing capital punishment, or attempts to pass legislation to abolish it, failed.

The press of the 1990s might in some ways and for the aforementioned reasons be better than was the press of the 1890s and 1930s, but the development of certain reporting techniques and practices by the modern-day press might also make it less likely that most newspaper readers will have any real understanding of just what happens at an execution. Even if the actual execution itself were televised, it is doubtful, to minds of some scholars, whether the public would gain any real understanding of the nature and the process of capital punishment, due in large part to the way the press reports.[118] Also, modern reporting techniques make it more difficult for the press to practice "righteous indignation" in the news stories about executions. In this respect the press might be somewhat of a mirror of the change of more general societal attitudes. Historian Leonard Levy contends that in the United States, the people have lost their moral or righteous indignation in some ways.[119]

Reporting techniques, culture, and technology have combined to make the press of today better in some respects and worse in others in regard to reporting on the technology of capital punishment.

Jonesboro (Arkansas) *Sun,* 19 January 1995, 1. And, of course, the rare photos that come from executions do sell newspapers. See discussion of the famous photo of the electrocution of Ruth Snyder in New York in 1928 in Edwin Emery and Michael Emery, *The Press and America,* 5th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc.), 391-392.

116. Bedau, Radelet, Putnam. *In Spite of Innocence,* 164-165.

117. See examples in Trombley, *The Execution Protocol,* 43.

118. Lesser, *Pictures At An Execution.*

119. Leonard Levy, *Blasphemy: Verbal Offenses against the Sacred, from Moses to Salman Rushdie* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

But, regardless of the technique, the culture, or the technology, a point that should be considered is whether the press has and still does concentrate too much on the method of state-sanctioned killing and too little on the fact of state-sanctioned killing. This study found that for most of the period studied there was much discussion about the method, but very little until recent times about the fact.

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Sex, Lies, and Autobiography: Contributions of Life Study to Journalism History

Editor's note: The following four essays are adapted from a panel discussion under the above title, presented at the 1995 convention of the American Journalism Historians Association in Tulsa. Professor Steiner was panel organizer and moderator.

What Can be Learned?

By Linda Steiner

In the mid-1600s, Margaret Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle, wrote her autobiography. Indeed, she was the first woman to write what was formally called an autobiography. Anticipating that others might ask, "Why hath this lady written her own life?" she answered: "It is to no purpose to the Readers, but it is to the Authoress, because I write for my own sake, not theirs."[1]

Perhaps modesty prevented the Duchess from making larger claims. Certainly modesty has been demanded of women in personal and professional life, and in autobiography. Even in writing their autobiographies, many women of considerable accomplishment and fame have been unwilling to admit openly to ambition or pride, and reluctant to propose explicitly that people would learn from them. Milly Bennett, after reading a draft of her account of her journalistic adventures covering the Chinese Revolution, asked herself: "Good God. Did I

1. Quoted in Domna C. Stanton, *The Female Autograph* (New York: New York Literary Forum), 15.

write this nonsense?"[2] Yet, in the very act of phrasing a question, both the Duchess and Bennett directly addressed readers, thus implying that something could be learned in and from their lives.

They were right. The history of journalism as a cultural practice has much to gain from the study of newsworkers' lives. Autobiographical and biographical works can illuminate the professional life of individuals in ways that stitch in how that work was conducted in institutional, social, and community, as well as personal settings. Lives (here, referring to those who are studied biographically, including through their autobiographical "self-writing") reflect on newsroom dynamics and processes. Several crucial questions about social, political, cultural, economic, and pedagogic issues in journalism can be addressed by examining how print and broadcast journalists have responded to the conditions of their work. These responses are suggested, if not provided explicitly, in autobiographies and in the other sorts of documents that biographers use, including letters, diaries, memos, and recalled conversation.

The argument here is not that the scholarly value of a person's life results from the "independent" impact that person has on journalism. Such a warrant for biography is precisely, and rightly, what has made feminist scholars uneasy. The problem is not only that atomist notion of individualism per se — that Enlightenment idea of the rational individual whose ideas emanate from independent thought and whose works are accomplished single-handedly. Feminist historians have noted that since many women have been shunted to the margins of public work, including in journalism, they have not accomplished the kinds of public deeds that result in measurable impact. Despite the pleasures of redeeming unknown women or rescuing understudied women from the footnotes, feminist historians have reasoned, biographical research on "female worthies" inevitably reifies masculine standards for importance and misrepresents how those male models and standards are not "natural," but are socially constructed in a highly gendered way. Applied to journalism, feminists' reluctance to study individual women has followed from their unwillingness to elevate to significance only those women who acted like men and thereby to consign into oblivion women who reported on/for women. (This conflation of reporting by, for, and on women is intentional, as is the absence of any distinction between choosing such assignments and being forced into them.) It is largely a fair accusation: Much historical study of famous individuals exaggerates their importance. Even students of "minor" figures apparently feel obliged to discover the otherwise-unappreciated major impact of their subjects.

Inverting the question produces a somewhat different proposition: What we learn from studying people's lives is how social practices affect workers. Furthermore, at this point in the history of journalism scholarship, much of what we want yet to understand cannot be studied by analyzing the pages of newspapers and magazines. The work process, the agony, the conflicts, and the tensions have been covered over by the editorial process. Ironically, precisely

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2. Milly Bennett, *On Her Own*, ed. A. Tom Grunfeld (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1993), xix.

because journalism entails collaboration and mediation by multiple gatekeepers and bureaucratic and hierarchical processes, even a scholar's highly nuanced reading of stories published over time will not reveal much about how a story came to be, what other kinds of stories the reporter wanted to write, who stood behind — or against — the story, and who stood behind — or against — the writer. Granted, we do not need biography to see — or read — how journalism conventions have changed over time. Careful reading of newspapers allows us to trace the emergence, let's say, of conventions of objectivity, or the substitution of an information model for the older story-telling form of journalism. But, reading or watching the news will not tell us how workers felt about their work, will not show whether they resented changes, whether they challenged standards. Even before newsrooms were computerized, journalists were loathe to save or even produce drafts; so, again, published news stories reveal little or nothing about their genesis and development. If we want to understand the workings of journalism, or journalisms in the plural, then, we may want to approach the workings of journalists biographically.

Autobiography in particular has been historically marginalized as no more than fictional. Particularly when taken collectively, however, autobiography may be highly useful in answering interesting questions. How do journalists get along in the newsroom? Or, assuming they do not, what is disruptive in the newsroom — personalities of various kinds, concerns about power, management decisions? How are they trained or socialized into newsroom conventions? What do they believe affects their own work? What do they say about race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, politics? How have they managed the intersections of work and family life? How have women and men resolved conflicts between work and other dimensions of their lives, or do they claim to resolve those conflicts? Do they believe these issues affect their work, their writing, their relationships with sources or readers or colleagues? Some years ago, Curtis McDougall's son admitted in a piece for an alternative magazine that he had managed to sneak his Marxist views into articles for a couple of major papers, including the *Wall Street Journal.* A broadcast journalist was fired after she admitted that she had determined to sneak Christian messages into her nightly newscasts. These claims created tremendous controversy, and some denials from former editors. But have many other writers admitted that they self-consciously tried this? Did they want to? Did they try and get caught, censored, edited?

My interest is gender. But what interests me is not the lives of individual women per se and it is certainly not gender difference as some natural phenomenon. Instead, what I want to understand is how journalism is itself gendered and how gender inequalities have been negotiated or even celebrated in journalism and mass media practices. What have been women's experiences with sexual harassment — from sources, editors, colleagues, even readers? When, how, and for whom has this affected their work, their relationships, their stories? A comparative study of women's autobiographies shows the gradual emergence of the notion that their authors are reporters, first and foremost. Yet, while many women assert that thinking is sexless, they cannot help but think

about gender. However else they differ, they cannot write their lives, even as professional reporters, without considering gender politics.

Studying people's lives would enhance current understandings of professionalism. To what extent have journalists resisted or embraced this? Who has resisted or embraced professionalism in the abstract, or certain specific practices in the name of professionalism? How have journalists dealt with arguments and competition over money, status, prizes, and assignments/beats? Of primary interest to me is the way that people's lives speak to all sorts of ethical conflicts, including ones that result in stories not getting published. Autobiographies of early twentieth century women reporters almost invariably recounted dilemmas that developed, in their view, because their loyalties were split between their identities as professional reporters and their obligations as women. Sometimes they simply lied to their editors rather than explain their refusal to expose a "sister's" secrets. In any case, given the difficulty of studying what does not get printed, autobiographical recollections may be the only appropriate resource.

For example, Frances Davis explained in her autobiography (the book was also a history of the utopian community where she grew up) her journalistic start as a printer's devil and editor's dogsbody for a small magazine, part of her attempt to be a foreign correspondent. She idolized Vincent Sheean and Dorothy Thompson: "To such demigods belonged the world," she said.[3] Not surprisingly, everyone discouraged her — as a woman. But in 1936, predicting war and with a few newspapers agreeing to carry her "mail column," she went off to France. She made her way to Spain, where, despite her own politics, she landed a job covering the Civil War for a pro-Franco London paper. She was increasingly guilt-ridden over the severe price she had to pay for reporting the war — not the pain of walking around with an infected shell wound, but having to refer to the Generals as "Patriots" and the Loyalists as "Reds." Then, she nearly died from blood poisoning. She was forced to return to the United States to recover. Despite the protestations of her lover, she tried to return to Spain: "My job is to cover this war. How could I deny that fact for the dream of a private life?" Ultimately, however, she was rehospitalized and forced to acknowledge that she was too weak and susceptible to infection ever to work as a journalist again.

Frances Davis's story, then, shows that studying life stories may also explain not only journalism's attraction as a career, if indeed people are "attracted" to it, but also why people leave the field. In greater and lesser measures, these explanations may involve journalism's ethical and emotional demands, or conflicts with domestic life. In any case, such stories are unlikely to turn up in standard journalism history or in the documents that journalism historians conventionally study.

This is not to defend all biographical and autobiographical study. Studying a particular individual can be enormously satisfying. Nonetheless, the

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3. Frances Davis, *A Fearful Innocence* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1981), 118.

notion that biographical work is "fun," or even "easy," despite the sometimes frightening dangers of over-identifying with one's subjects, is not sufficient justification for such scholarship, at least in my admittedly Puritanical view. More importantly, I do not endorse casual study by anyone of anyone's life. As the next three essays show in greater detail, several constraints are at work and need to be problematized, including how we use documents, how we choose which people to study, and how we recognize and acknowledge our limitations as scholars. The materials we use themselves have limitations. But, rather than treating the social, economic, technical, and narrative constraints as paralyzing. these stipulations should be seen as leads to be pursued and issues to be accounted for, if history is to be fully contextualized .

Biography and autobiography are certainly "mediated" along a variety of dimensions. Inability to write is not, of course, a problem. Indeed, all kinds of newsworkers have preserved their lives in some form. That is, materials are available. Yet, not everyone's documents — their diaries, memoirs, correspondence — get preserved and archived. Not every autobiography gets published, and certain forms are more acceptable for certain people than others. (I suspect that the greater number of women publishing memoirs or books organized around journalistic adventure and anecdote, rather than fullblown chronological accounts of one's history, results from what publishers will accept or what women guess publishers will accept.) Nor do autobiographies — any more than do scholarly manuscripts — get published as first drafted or even as re-drafted. Autobiographies are not only mediated through self-censorship but also potentially changed by friends or family members, editors, publishers. Any of these parties might demand changes on the basis of what they believe is socially or politically acceptable, marketable, or protects their self-interests. Biographers are likewise not privy to pristine archives. Instead, they work with materials that are to some unknown extent "policed." Subjects preselect or even self-consciously alter their writing, and choose what they want preserved.

The newsworkers who were not famous and not powerful may be less careful about shaping their image and may have less interest in consciously fiddling with their sense of facticity. Not only are they less likely to encourage their correspondents and confidantes to censor their own letters, diary entries, and so forth, they may be less experimental in their writing. More mindful of the autobiographical "pact" (as Phillip Lejeune puts it), they may produce materials that are relatively transparent. Furthermore, they experience fairly directly, although not necessarily passively, changes in how things are done. For these reasons, I would go so far as to argue that the stories of non-notables are more likely to provide insights about the evolution of newsroom practices and newspaper philosophy. Likewise, journalists who worked for smaller dailies, community weeklies, and a variety of alternative presses not only can be studied, but should be. Whether or not their practices mimic those of the elite press, their practices may represent more "modal" responses. As historians who are not trafficking in individual sensibilities, we must hesitate before making claims based on one person's case. At least hypothetically assuming enormous reserves of patience and time and energy, we can incorporate the study of the lives of

several people, in order to distinguish what may have been idiosyncratic from what were more common patterns. Even then, we need to be tentative, and not jump to conclusions too quickly, or too early.

Finally, several scholars of autobiography emphasize that people lie in their self-writing, or at least they creatively manipulate the details. Yet, to legitimize the use of autobiography, one need not resort to psychological explanation of Mark Twain, who claimed that the remorseless truth is there, between the lines. The fact that both self-narrative and biographical narrative are shaped by the social assumptions and narrative conventions prevailing at a given moment and therefore are not reducible to reality does not mean that they are incommensurable with it. The fundamental duplicity of language need not be regarded as fatally undoing biographical work, but rather as scholarly challenge.

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What Have We Learned by Studying Lives?

By Michael Robertson

I have rephrased my title question, in the light of my study of the work of American novelists who also produced journalism. Thus, the question I want to explore is, "What are the uses of biography in studying the complex interactions among literature, journalism, and literary journalism?" My answer? The uses are many.

Biographical approaches have been little employed in the study of literary journalism. The dominant critical approach has been formalist. Typically, critics employ New Criticism methods of close reading to demonstrate that a particular work of journalism is just as good as fiction. Alternatively, as illustrated by Phyllis Frus's recent book, they employ a deconstructive methodology to prove that there is no difference between journalism and fiction. In either case, biography has been a minor adjunct to formalist criticism. Even with Thomas Connery's *A Sourcebook of American Literary Journalism* — my own entry on Stephen Crane included, biography was employed largely as a convenient means of organization: "While working as a reporter in Chicago, X produced the following works."[4]

Yet, biography can do more than provide a narrative framework for formalist analyses of a writer's work. To demonstrate that point, I would like to examine three snapshots of novelists-journalists at work, three historical tableaux, as it were, involving a writer at a specific place and time, that reveal something about journalism and literature that could not be gleaned from other modes of analysis.

My first snapshot, taken, anachronistically, before the invention of the hand-held camera, is of Henry James in 1876. The setting is one of the fashionable arondissements of Paris's Right Bank. The youthful James has

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4. Phyllis Frus, *The Politics and Poetics of Journalistic Narrative* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Thomas B. Connery, *A Sourcebook of American Literary Journalism* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1992).

recently settled in Paris, where he is determined to supplement the modest income from his fiction by writing correspondence for the *New York Tribune*. The *Tribune* has two other correspondents in Paris who cover political developments, so James is free to fill his occasional letters with miscellaneous news about the cultural life of the French capital.

A formalist critic would study the newspaper letters for what they reveal about the development of James's art. But a biographical investigator might be more interested in the circumstances that surrounded James's cessation of his newspaper correspondence after only eight months. His break with the *Tribune* came after James wrote *Tribune* editor Whitelaw Reid, requesting a raise in pay. Reid responded on 10 August 1876:

> Dear Mr. James:
> I am in receipt of your favor of the 25th July suggesting an advance of one-half the payment for your letters.
> I have been on the point of writing you making a suggestion of a quite different nature. It was to the effect that the letters should be made rather more "newsy" in character, and somewhat shorter, and that they should be sent somewhat less frequently . . . . We have feared that your letters were sometimes on topics too remote from popular interests to please more than a select few of our readers . . . . If you can adopt this suggestion, I think you will agree with me that there would then be less occasion for a change in the rate of payment.
> You must not imagine that any of us have failed to appreciate the admirable work you have done for us. The difficulty has sometimes been not that it was too good, but that it was magazine rather than newspaper work.

James replied on 30 August:

> Dear Mr. Reid:
> I have just received your letter of August 10th. I quite appreciate what you say about the character of my letters, and about their not being the right sort of thing for a newspaper. I have been half expecting to hear from you to that effect . . . . But I am afraid I can't assent to your proposal that I should try and write otherwise. I know the sort of letter you mean—it is doubtless the proper sort of thing for the *Tribune* to have. But I can't produce it—I don't know how and I couldn't learn how . . . . it would be poor economy for me to try and become "newsy" and gossipy. I am too finical a writer and I should be constantly becoming more "literary" than is desirable . . . . If my letters have been "too good" I am honestly afraid that they

> are the poorest I can do, especially for the money! I had better, therefore, suspend them altogether.[5]

James's witty penultimate sentence contains a crucial misreading of Reid's letter. Ignoring Reid's negative, James quotes him as saying that the letters had been "too good" for the newspaper. With this creative misreading, James participates in the construction of an extremely influential myth about journalism and literature that arose during the nineteenth century. I call it a myth not to imply that it is untrue, but rather to call attention to its status as a master narrative that both expresses and shapes cultural possibilities.[6] According to the myth, there exists a firmly established hierarchy of discourse, with the "literary" fixed far above the "newsy." The myth's hero is the literary artist who is doomed to failure in the literary marketplace; its antihero is the vulgar journalist. James drew upon this myth of journalism and literature throughout the rest of his career in highly esteemed novels, including *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) and *The Bostonians* (1886), and in numerous short stories.[7]

The Jamesian myth, with its biographical origins in James's work for the *Tribune*, has had an incalculable influence on interpretations of journalism and literature for more than a century. Yet, it is not the only literary-journalistic myth circulating in our culture; a competing myth had one of its originating moments one hundred years ago.

My second snapshot is taken in a seedy neighborhood in lower Manhattan in 1895; its subject is Stephen Crane. Born a generation after Henry James, Crane came of age along with the extraordinary post-Civil War expansion of American journalism. By the time Crane reached maturity in the 1890s, the role of metropolitan reporter had, for the first time in American history, become a viable occupational choice for a college-educated young person. On his own in New York City in the early 1890s, and needing to support himself while he wrote poetry and fiction, Crane turned to freelance journalism, writing feature stories about urban life for the *Tribune* and a number of other newspapers. He struggled in less-than-genteel poverty until 1895, when the publication of *The Red Badge of Courage* made him internationally famous. According to H. L. Mencken, when the public realized that Crane was a New York City reporter,

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5. Henry James, *Parisian Sketches: Letters to the* New York Tribune, *1875-76,* ed. Leon Edel and Ilse Dusoir Lind (New York: New York University Press, 1957), 217-20.

6. On the use of "myth" in this sense, see Richard Slotkin's trilogy on the American West, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1973); *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890* (New York: Atheneum, 1985); *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992).

7. See the stories collected in Henry James, *Stories of Artists and Writers,* ed. F.O. Matthiessen (New York: New Directions, n.d.), especially "The Next Time" (1895), which is a retelling of James's experience on the *Tribune.*

"the miracle lifted newspaper reporting to the level of a romantic craft, alongside counterfeiting and mining in the Klondike."[8]

Mencken's witty line, like James's letter to Whitelaw Reid, reveals a cultural myth in the process of construction. According to the Jamesian myth, journalism is a threat to art and the artist. In the myth constructed around Crane's biography, journalism serves as a training ground for literature. The Crane myth's benign view of journalism in its relation to literature is no more and no less "true" than James's hostile view. What matters is that the Crane myth influenced the career of countless twentieth century writers, young people with literary ambitions who sought work on newspapers. H.L. Mencken was one of them; others include Jack London, Katherine Anne Porter, Eudora Welty, Ernest Hemingway. The list goes on and on.

The examples of James and Crane demonstrate the value of biographical study in understanding the literarure-journalism nexus. Biography illuminates how the journalistic and literary marketplaces shape writers' careers and how careers are shaped by myths constructed around the lives of literary-journalistic predecessors. The good news is that in recent years a number of scholars in the field of American Studies have written biographically-based analyses that are attentive both to the marketplace and to cultural myths. To take scholarship on Henry James as one example, several fine studies have illuminated James's complex relation to the literary and journalistic marketplace.[9] By exploring both journalism and literature as social practices, these works indirectly respond to John Pauly's call that we study journalism not only as a product but as a practice.[10]

Much remains to be done, which leads me to my third and final snapshot, taken in 1985. The setting is an office in the Columbia Journalism School in New York. The subject, though he is absent from this photograph, is William Kennedy. I had just submitted to *Columbia Journalism Review* an article on Kennedy, a former reporter for the *Albany Times-Union* who gained fame as a novelist after *Ironweed* won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction. My article focused on the relation between journalism and literature in Kennedy's career and in his art, and traced the history of the reporter-novelist over the past century.[11] When the editor and I met in his office to go over the article, we began to discuss Stephen Crane and his successors and the relation between journalism

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8. H.L. Mencken, "Introduction," in *Major Conflicts,* vol. 10 of *The Work of Stephen Crane* (New York: Knopf, 1926), x-xi.

9. See Michael Anesko, *"Friction with the Market": Henry James and the Profession of Authorship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Daniel Borus, *Writing Realism: Howells, James, and Norris in the Mass Market* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Marcia Jacobson, *Henry James and the Mass Market* (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1983).

10. John Pauly, "New Directions for Research in Journalism History," in *Guide to Sources in American Journalism History,* ed. Lucy Shelton Caswell (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1989), 31-46.

11. Michael Robertson, "The Reporter as Novelist: The Case of William Kennedy," *Columbia Journalism Review* (January-February 1986): 49-52.

and literature in the careers of contemporary writers. Both of us had many questions: Do ambitious young people still view journalism as a stepping stone to literature, as they did in the early part of this century? Or, as Tom Wolfe argues, has the increasing prestige of literary nonfiction drawn America's most talented writers away from fiction into journalism?[12] Or, have the proliferation of Master of Fine Arts programs and the demand for creative writing teachers led young writers to ignore journalism in favor of teaching jobs in the academy? The editor and I traded anecdotes, but neither of us could answer the questions we raised. It seemed to me then, as it does now, that the way to find the answers is through the process exemplified by these essays: the study of lives.

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12. Tom Wolfe, *The New Journalism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973).

Whose Lives Should be Studied?

By Thomas B. Connery

Anne O'Hare McCormick and Dorothy Thompson, two of this century's most important and influential foreign affairs columnists and reporters, are often presented as rivals as well as polar opposites. They worked for competing newspapers, Thompson for the *New York Herald-Tribune* and McCormick for the *New York Times*. Thompson was considered emotional, loud, brawling, and always in the spotlight, even with her marriages, particularly her marriage to Sinclair Lewis. McCormick was reserved, reasonable, conciliatory, ruled by her mind instead of her emotions; she obsessively avoided the spotlight and was devoted to her only husband, who accompanied her on all her overseas assignments.

Letters that Thompson wrote to McCormick from Vermont in 1946, however, reveal a far more interesting relationship than the word "rivalry" suggests. These also hint what may have been beneath the seemingly superficial professional and personality differences that some people claimed distinguished these two journalists. Insider talk in their correspondence shows just how these women were at the center of issues and activity, clearly connected to people in power, and willing to share their views on all issues of the day, from Roosevelt to Molotov.

In a letter dated 29 July 1946, Thompson praised McCormick's work, describing herself as a "fan" of McCormick. In discussing the situation in postwar Europe, Thompson alluded to the personality traits that seemed most to distinguish the two: "But I don't know why I am trying to persuade you—who always sees everything so clearly, and do not, like me, overwork your adrenalin glands at the same time, nor strain your larynx on the typewriter." In closing, Thompson said that although she read McCormick "with pleasure and profit," she longed to talk with her "over some whisky," and she invited McCormick and McCormick's husband to visit for a few days. "If you will come I will put flowers in your room and on your breakfast tray and kill a fatted lamb." In a postscript, Thompson promised, "If you come, the *Times* will be in your hands at 9:30 a.m."

A month later, after McCormick had told Thompson that she would be unable to visit because she and Frank were soon off to Paris to report on postwar Europe, Thompson wrote, "Good luck — and I shall feel, at least, that I have an ally in Paris."

It's clear from letters and other documents that their personality traits, their characters, and background did indeed affect the way they approached their work, and that these traits significantly defined the nature of their journalism. To understand their journalism, therefore, depends on answering certain questions that in turn require looking at their life stories: What did they do? How did they do it? Why did they do it?

Thompson's and McCormick's lives are worth exploring, of course, because they were two of the most influential journalists of their time. Yet, while biographies of Thompson are available, none have been done on McCormick. Until about ten years ago, McCormick's work and life had been virtually ignored. This serves as a good example of how researchers, not unlike some journalists, tend to focus on those who bray the loudest or blow their own horns the most.

We also have biographies on the owners-founders, the Big Cigars of journalism. So, for instance, we all know about the so-called "giants" of the nineteenth century, as well as those who headed or created journalistic empires and entities, such as Henry Luce. Other life stories are told because the person was — or seemed to be — a mover or shaker, usually in more than one field. Ronald Steel's biography of Walter Lippman is a good example. More recently have appeared biographies based on celebrity status, such as television journalist Jessica Savitch. It also helps to have left a detailed and extensive paper trail, particularly if much of that paper is collected in one location, such as a university library, historical society or research center.

In the end, we have gotten, for the most part, biographies of those easily found in the spotlight, the journalistic stars or media celebrities, those who attracted controversy and political attention, or those who had power and money through ownership. These are the Brayers, the Big Cigars, the Movers and Shakers, and the Celebs. Furthermore, we are likely to find multiple biographies on those people who fit multiple categories. Biographers concentrate their efforts on a relatively small number of people who can be described by several of these factors.

Except for the power and ownership issue, the Big Cigar category, all of these factors apply to Thompson, and none to McCormick. But do we need another biography of Thompson? In the most popular Thompson biography we learn more about the affair she had with another woman, or the way her Vermont farm house shook when she and her last husband made love than we learn about what distinguished her journalism. Because her journalism has not yet received the proper analysis that might emerge with a sound biographical analysis, another study might seem appropriate. But as long as we know so little of the lives of the likes of McCormick, Sigrid Arne, Doris Fleeson, and other contemporaries of Thompson's, let's set Thompson's life aside unless it's

considered within the context of these other women who achieved journalistic success and influence in the 1930s and 1940s.

Do we need another biography of Hearst, Pulitzer, or Luce? Certainly, new treatments of their lives and work can provide new understanding of journalism in American society, and of the nature of their individual and institutional failures and achievements. We have a greater need, however, to broaden and deepen our understanding of journalism in society by greatly extending the range of our biographical explorations.

Clearly, until recently, women's contributions in journalism, and therefore women's lives, have been ignored or overlooked. Men who weren't owners-founders, stars, or controversial figures, however, have been ignored as well. It's only recently, for example, that we've had a biography of Julian Ralph, who was one of the most accomplished and influential reporters of the late nineteenth century, as well as one of Nellie Bly, one of the best known bylines of her generation. Virtually nothing has been done on the life and work of Henry Mills Alden, who edited *Harper's Monthly* for an astonishing fifty years (1869-1919) and greatly influenced the direction of American fiction and culture. Alden didn't bray, move, shake, or smoke a big enough cigar. A list of the neglected or ignored would go on and on, and would include both men and women.

That is, we need biographical explorations of journalists like Alden or McCormick. We need life studies of those who were clearly successful in that they were recognized by their peers for the high quality of their work or read carefully and religiously (or listened to or watched). They were people who influenced their craft or profession, and often shaped public discourse and culture as well.

But we can also determine whose lives should be studied by answering the question universal to research and scholarship: What do I want to know? With the successful or famous, we are in effect saying, "I want to know about this interesting or influential person's life because she was influential or interesting." In the process, of course, we expect to learn more about journalism at a particular time. We need, however, to be driven by other questions as well. Robert Caro, for instance, has said that one of his primary reasons for studying Lyndon Johnson "was to demonstrate and illuminate political power through a biography of a single individual."

If we are trying to understand a specific period of journalism, or a concept peculiar to journalism, or want to see how something common culturally applied to those in journalism, or a host of other possible items, it would make sense to know more about the people involved, to investigate the connection between the human and personal side and the journalistic or professional, looking perhaps not just for a representative figure, but representative figures. McCormick's life and her journalism are worth a closer look because they were influential. But they also are worth a closer look because they tell us about American society and about journalism's place within it, as well as women's place within journalism.

My contention then is that our understanding of particular forms and periods in journalism are made more complete if we understand the nature of life among its practioners at all levels. Referring to her own work on the significant role women played as Colonial printers, Susan Henry has said: "Without understanding the lives they led as women, I could not understand their work as printers, while a study of their work revealed much about who they were as women." The same can be said regarding a host of male journalists throughout history. The professional cannot and should not be divorced from the private and personal.

Ronald Steel provides a good example of that concept at work. Walter Lippman wrote *A Preface to Morals,* which deals with stoicism, during the last, quite unhappy years of Lippman's first marriage. Steel came to realize that the position taken in the book clearly stemmed from Lippman's domestic unhappiness. Lippman would not have written the same book later, when he was happily married to his second wife, Steel concluded.

To understand a person's role at a newspaper, magazine or TV station, it's necessary to find the real reasons for a person's actions. Biography puts a human life at the center, rather than technology or ideology or broad social forces, although it doesn't ignore any of that. It's people who develop and hold to certain ideas, and who then express them somehow in their work and behavior. It's neither trivial nor unimportant to understand the life and personality, the emotional forces, that shaped that expression. Individual lives and individual choices matter.

A good biography will not only uncover those people hidden from view, but also provide a better view of culture's larger themes and social aspects. It's up to the biographer to show how and why they matter, selecting subjects by looking for representative figures and by determining what it is we wish to know.

How was it that two of the finest foreign affairs reporters and columnists, Thompson and McCormick, turned out to be women writing at.the same time? That question might be answered with an assessment of their work, but it won't be complete without an assessment of their lives, or with a look at the lives of other journalists working for newspapers — not owning them — in that period.

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Who Should do the Studying?

By Rodger Streitmatter

Six years ago when I decided to undertake a biographical study of the first African-American woman journalist to cover the White House and U.S. Congress, it never crossed my mind to consider whether Alice Allison Dunnigan and I were a good match. My goal was to illuminate the life and work of a journalist who had made an important, but largely overlooked, contribution to the evolution of the American news media — to fill a hole in the historical record.

By the time I had presented my first paper on Dunnigan at an academic conference, however, I had learned that many scholars were more concerned, not with the value or quality of my research, but with the color of my skin and the anatomical features of my body. To be more specific, the woman assigned to discuss my paper asked me: "What gives you, a white man, the right to research the life of a black woman?"

The question caught me completely off guard. I stammered something about the fact that Dunnigan's papers had sat untouched at the Howard University Library for twelve years before I came along to look at them, and I also said — quite defensively, as I look back on it — that I felt no proprietary rights over either Dunnigan or her papers. It was not an articulate answer.

Today I am considerably more adept at answering that question. I should be. I've had to respond to it during most of the eleven conference presentations I have made on my work on African-American women journalists — not to mention during the process of publishing nine articles, three book chapters, and my book, *Raising Her Voice: African-American Women Journalists Who Changed History.*

And yet my basic answer remains: Every area of research should be open to every scholar.

I would hate for the day to come when only black women write about black women, only Asian men write about Asian men, or only lesbians write about lesbians. Bowing to such dreadful constraints would create more barriers,

when many of us believe we are making progress in promoting diversity in American journalism history.

Any serious biographer with a commitment to exploring and understanding a particular figure — including the subject's motivations, and personal and professional weaknesses as well as strengths, and the various forces that influenced the subject's life and work — has every right to undertake that scholarly study. And as long as individual biographers are confident that they can overcome whatever cultural barriers that may arise, I can see no reason why these biographers should not proceed.

Nonetheless, I readily acknowledge that researching and writing about a race, gender, or sexual orientation that is not a scholar's own creates major impediments. Those of us who cross those lines have to work harder to compensate for our lack of knowledge and innate sensitivity.

Particularly during the early stages of my work on African-American women, I asked both female and African-American scholars to review my manuscripts. Their comments often were extremely helpful. A black scholar, for example, questioned my statement that Dunnigan had written numerous articles during the 1950s about leading hotels and restaurants in Washington, D.C., becoming *integrated.* My colleague suggested that a better term might be *desegregated*, since, in most cases, the majority of patrons still were white. Her point was valid, and I changed my manuscript before submitting it for publication. The various reviewers challenged only a handful of my statements, however. I would argue that their questions merely represent the benefits of the review process.

While writing my history of African-American women journalists, the far more difficult problems I faced derived from my constantly having to fight the perception that a white man could not or should not write about black women. This particularly caused problems because, although each of the eleven women I profiled in the book was remarkable, they were not without personal and professional blemishes. So, in keeping with various scholars of women in journalism who call for researchers not to glorify female historical figures but to approach them with rigorous analysis,[13] I pointed out what I saw as my subjects' flaws. For example, two of the nineteenth century women wrote with a strong elitist tone.

In presenting a paper at a women's studies conference in Massachusetts, I dared to mention such a flaw. Shazam! The discussant and at least a dozen women in the audience argued that I was "beating up" on my subject because she was a black woman and I am a white man. That single negative comment

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13. For examples of scholars calling for more rigorous examination of women journalists, see Mary Ann Yodelis Smith, "Research Retrospectives: Feminism and the Media," *Communication Research* 9 (January 1982): 245-60; Zena Beth McGlashen, "Women Witness the Russian Revolution: Analyzing Ways of Seeing," *Journalism History,* 12 (summer 1985): 54; Susan Henry, "Changing Media History Through Women's History," in Pamela J. Creedon, ed., *Women in Mass Communication: Challenging Gender Values* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1989): 40.

dominated the discussion of the paper, even though ninety-five percent of the paper praised the woman I was writing about. The experience was frustrating not only because it hurts to be attacked, but also because I ended up receiving no constructive feedback on my work.

This problem reemerged when *Raising Her Voice* was being edited at the University Press of Kentucky. The in-house editor accused me of being sexist because in each biographical chapter I mentioned whether or not the woman had children. I found the editor's point ludicrous. Certainly in the nineteenth century, when social mores dictated that women had the primary responsibility for raising children (as well as today, I would argue, when most of them still do), a woman's professional life was significantly affected by her personal life — especially whether or not she had children. I won that particular battle with the editor, and my book includes whether each woman had children. If I were a female scholar, however, I would not have been forced to fight that battle.

The same theme has continued with the reviews of my book. I will say — not immodestly, I realize — that the reviews have been glowing. The five published reviews that I have seen have praised the work as groundbreaking, well researched, and well written. The single negative comment was, predictably, that I was wrong to criticize the two women's writing as having an elitist tone.

By this point, I have come to accept such comments as the price that I pay for crossing race and gender boundaries. That has not dissuaded me. I prefer to focus on the fact that literally dozens of fellow journalism historians—most of them women and several of them African-American women — have praised my work as making a major contribution to our field.

Returning to the primary purpose of this essay: while I do not believe that factors such as a scholar's race, gender, or sexual orientation should preclude him or her from researching a particular subject, I wholeheartedly believe that such factors affect our work.

Whether I am researching and writing scholarly work or a newspaper article — I spent ten years in newsrooms before shifting to the classroom—I know that who I am and what I have experienced definitely influence which questions I ask and how I present the answers. My perspective on the world and what is important is profoundly shaped, for example, by my being male. In other words, I do not believe in the concept of objectivity. We as authors can and should strive for fairness, but we cannot be entirely objective.

This leads to the issue of exactly how much we, as scholarly biographers, should tell our readers about who we are. I certainly believe that someone who writes a book about a topic owes it to readers to answer some fundamental questions. In the introduction to *Raising Her Voice,* I stated that I am a white man; in the introduction to my second book, *UNSPEAKABLE: The Rise of the Gay and Lesbian Press in America,* I said that I am a gay man.

The question becomes more difficult regarding shorter works, such as journal articles, that generally include only a one-sentence author identification. Conventions generally make it fairly easy for readers to know that an author named "Linda" is female, while the article written by "Tom" comes from a male

perspective. Indicating one's race is somewhat more difficult, although some journals contain photographs of authors, which usually communicates this information.

I would argue, however, that neither names nor photos (i.e., neither gender nor race) provide information about profound influences on how scholars approach a topic. Alice Allison Dunnigan was the daughter of sharecroppers who had only a few years of formal education; I am the son of factory workers who never graduated from high school. I would suggest that the working-class backgrounds we share had significant impact on how I approached Dunnigan as a biographical subject. In addition to my author identification stating that I am a professor at American University, perhaps it should have mentioned that when Dunnigan and I were growing up, we shared the experience of having to use outhouses located 100 yards behind the houses we slept in.

Nor does this issue stop with class or socioeconomic status. My next major research project involves examining how the news media have shaped American history. The study will include several biographies. When I write about Father Charles E. Coughlin, an anti-Semitic Catholic priest, should I tell my readers that I was born a Methodist and am now on Episcopalian? When I write about journalists covering the Vietnam War, should I say that I wore an Army uniform during that era? When I write about Rush Limbaugh helping to lead the 1994 Republican Revolution, should I state that in twenty-five years of voting I have not once cast a ballot for a Republican?

Now I seem to have written an essay that raises more questions than it answers. So, I will try to return to my original point: I believe any serious-minded, well-intentioned researcher should be open to studying any topic he or she choose. Nonetheless, my experience suggests that *crossing* such boundaries as race, gender, and sexual orientation means that any adventurous scholar must overcome certain obstacles and, therefore, work harder.

Perhaps journal editors could cross some boundaries of convention themselves and allow authors the freedom to expand their author identifications to include whatever information the scholar believes may be relevant and useful to the reader for the particular topic at hand. I would argue that the possibilities range far beyond gender and race, however, and include such factors as class, sexual orientation, age, politics, religion, and ethnic heritage.

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Research Essay:

The Uses of History: The Media History Project

http://www.mediahistory.com/

By Kristina Ross

The Media History Project, a World Wide Web site, offers educators and students of media history a gateway to hypertext, photographic, video and audio resources pertinent to all phases of media innovation. Where traditional textbooks are limited by the demands of space and the economics of print, the Project is able to offer virtually unlimited, full-text access to key documents, essays, and illustrations regarding important concepts, theories, theorists, and other course materials relevant to the field.

The Media History Project is a hypertext index of online resources from around the world pertinent to all phases of media history — from petroglyphs to pixels and everything in between. Because the site is part of the World Wide Web (WWW), with a graphical browser (like Netscape), an Internet connection, and the requisite computing equipment (a terminal and modem), scholars, students, and interested lay persons worldwide can access hundreds to "pages" devoted to oral and scribal culture, literacy and print culture, journalism history, telegraphy, telephony, photography, radio, graphics and illustration, the recording industry, film, television and the cable industry, and computing history, as well as hundreds more pages of historical archives from leading institutions in the U.S. and Europe.

Why Use the Web Site?

The simplest answer is that the site is a combination multimedia textbook and library card catalog that organizes the wealth of online, media-history related resources in four ways. The first category, "Connections," organizes the online resources in order of technological innovation, beginning with writing and ending with computers. The technologies in this section include oral culture, writing, printing, journalism, photography, telegraphy, telephony, radio, film, sound recording, television, comics, graphics, and computing. An area devoted to advertising history will be incorporated in the near future. However, resources in this area are not limited to historical explanations or documentation of strictly technological innovation, and users of the Project will discover links to both media content and audience practices around these technologies, as well. Users can access exhibits from leading institutions (such as the Smithsonian's Information Age Exhibit), archives of historical documents (such as the Federalist Papers or Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses), and visit both academic and enthusiasts' collections of sound clips and photographs from radio, film, and television.

Because we cannot understand media history from a perspective of strictly technological invention, the second and third categories of organization occur in the "Keywords" section of the Project. This area, which has recently been added and is in continual revision, contains links to key concepts and theorists salient to media history. In this section are links to such terms as "oral culture," "utopia," and "global village," and to theorists such as Walter Ong and Harold Innis, among many others. While each link will differ in its depth and scope of material — each provides access to profiles, essays, or definitions written by numerous scholars and students — they do provide a starting point for an enlarged understanding of the necessarily multidisciplinary nature of the study of media history. In Rowland's (1995) terms,[1] the Project seeks to encompass media history horizontally — across disciplines — as well as vertically — across time.

The fourth category, "CourseWare," exists especially for media history educators, and provides links to professional and pedagogical resources, such as professional associations, journals, publishers, directories of email discussion lists, course syllabi, and software.

A Gateway to a Laboratory

In addition to considering the site a hypermedia textbook, however, educators and researchers should also think of it as a gateway to that immense media laboratory called the Internet. As students (and their instructors) increasingly venture into the online world, they discover many lessons of media history being re-enacted in cyberspace. New media appropriate the content of old

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1. Willard D. Rowland, Jr., foreword to *Communication in History,* David Crowley and Paul Heyer, ed. (White Plains, N.Y.: Longman, 1995), 11-14.

media (and vice versa). The politics of literacy condition and constrain who gets to use the new technologies and who doesn't; the same politics also impact the social hierarchies that re-establish themselves in Usenet newsgroups, on IRC (Internet Relay Chat) "channels," and on MUDs (Multi-User Dungeons) and MOOs (MUD's using Object Oriented programming). Policy makers and cultural critics engender the greatest expectations of the new medium, and then declaim it when those expectations are the slightest bit complicated by the dilemmas provoked by comparatively unregulated speech. New aesthetic blends emerge, and easily conjure lessons in art history, in postmodernity, in the simulacra, in collaborative creative expression, in myth, and in ritual. In the gold rush to capitalize on the marketing and advertising cachet of the "wired" world, new economic liaisons between previously discrete corporations and technologies compete and emerge. And nearly everywhere on the Internet, audiences of old media use the content of those old media to tell new tales, to construct a sense or virtual self, a sense of virtual place, and a sense of group membership.

The web site does not demonstrate all these ideas or lessons, by itself; broader participation in and observation of the general Internet is necessary. However, what the site might offer the adventurous cybernaut is a chance to return to the categories and theories of media history with some firsthand experience of history in action. The Media History Project can assist in that return, and may be able to prompt further the intellectual reflection upon the relationships between media, culture, society, politics, and economics. Ideally, the site will be a tool that is good to teach with and good to think with.

The History of the History Project

The site was developed out of love for the topic and frustration with the lack of a similar resource anywhere else. Since 1991, I have assigned my history students to adventure into cyberspace and report back to their class what they'd observed. Also since 1991, I have used David Crowley and Paul Heyer's textbook, *Communication in History,*[2] for the same undergraduate course. Finally, in 1994, when Mosaic first hit the Web, I was fortunate to receive summer support to learn hypertext markup language (HTML) in order to assist the University of Colorado School of Journalism and Mass Communication's[3] collaboration with the Boulder Community Network.[4] In part as a result of that training I now teach courses in online publishing and web page development, as well as print media history, at the University of Texas at El Paso.[5] These factors combined and led me, somewhat naturally, to translate most of the

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2. David Crowley and Paul Heyer, eds. *Communication in History.* (White Plains, NY: Longman, 1995).
3. The URL for the University of Colorado's School of Journalism and Mass Communication is http://bcn.boulder.co.us/campuspress/sjmc/sjmchome.html.
4. The URL for the Boulder Community Network is http://bcn.boulder.co.us/.
5. The Department of Communication at the University of Texas at El Paso can be found online, as well, at: http://www.utep.edu/~comm.

dominant themes of the Crowley and Heyer text (as well as incorporate some noteworthy omissions) into hypertext format and publish it on the web. The initial site went "live" on 12 June 1995, and since then (at the time of this writing) the main page has been visited over 26,000 times. It has received "fan" mail from Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, and Japan, and has been included in the University of Michigan's Clearinghouse of web sites as an approved, subject-oriented research guide. It has received several Internet awards for web page content and design, and is being featured in two forthcoming books on Internet resources for media. Also, on 28 July 1995, the *Chronicle of higher Education* published a brief article about the site (A-25).

The Future of the Project

In a discussion during the summer of 1995, members of the journalism history discussion list, J-History,[6] excavated the transformation of the acronym "CATV" (community access television) to its shortened version, today, "cable TV." At issue, clearly, was the question of when the notion "community access" (which implies active participation in the production of content) was dropped in favor of "cable" (which more emphasizes the passive, receptive notion of content delivery). Such discussion can often provide students and researchers in efficient and thoroughly up-to-date understanding of topics of interest to them, and in the summer of 1996, the History Project may begin offering summaries of significant threads from this discussion list.

As such scholarship increasingly extends into cyberspace, one means of legitimizing that practice is to provide a vehicle for the appropriate publication and distribution of research, and to assemble around that vehicle a community of knowledgeable peers. While the Project does have the ambition of housing peer-reviewed materials, its growth and continual development is dependent, in part, upon the broader participation of media historians in the online world. Presently, the Project accepts contributions of materials from scholars, students, and knowledgeable professionals or enthusiasts. To assist media scholars in converting their work into hypertext documents, an HTML tutorial is also available on the site. However, while the Project aspires to receive (and confer) the sort of approval that is useful in the tenuring process, it must and should remain accessible and useful to students, who do not typically consider scholarly journals to be immediately pertinent to their own research. Perhaps there is a way of achieving both institutional legitimacy and popular relevancy. We have an opportunity to try, and participation in the effort is urgently encouraged.

Further, if there is interest, this project could house archival materials relevant to the popular histories of media — oral histories, family photographs,

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6. J-History is an email discussion devoted to the history of journalism, and is available for free subscription to any student, professional or scholar interested in the topic. To join, send a message to listproc@lists.nyu.edu. In the body of the email message, write: subscribe jhistory your first name your last name. So if your name is Marshall McLuhan, you would write: subscribe jhistory Marshall McLuhan.

diaries, sound recordings or films — virtually anything digitizable — that illustrate or in some useful way amplify our understandings of the lived experiences around media history. With the wealth of lay interest and expertise online, it may be possible — with a great deal of help — to build the only online archive devoted exclusively to historical media audiences

Some Reflections on the Site's Development and Reception

I'm a doctoral candidate. I'm not an elder of the field, I have limited expertise in many of the sub-sections of the site, and like most junior professionals, I'm in need of a few more decades of reading and thinking to do the broad topic of media history justice. Nevertheless, now that the site is up and receiving international attention, I'm finding that the very helpful contributions from other scholars online are causing me to reconsider the architecture of the site; I'm finding that lay persons send me email requesting further information on arcane subjects about which I am hardly an expert, and I'm finding invitations to present papers and publish essays waiting for me in my mailbox. I won't be overly modest: I'm thrilled about much of this. However, these events are cause for some serious reflection on the nature of the site, on the nature of online publishing, and on the nature of being an early participant in a new medium.

One of the more recent revisions to the site — the inclusion of the "Keywords" section — occurred as a result of an email I received from Ron Burnett at McGill University. Professor Burnett has built a set of web pages devoted to cultural studies,[7] and he suggested I link to them. I'm always delighted to receive such suggestions, but Professor Burnett's reemphasized to me how much the site sacrificed theoretical coherence for pragmatics. At that time, the site contained only the "Connections" pages, which indexes media technologies arranged in rough chronological order. This was the most obvious — and easiest — way to arrange the resources. Yet, when the issue is *making sense* of the chronology, the simple index to technologies was probably the least useful means of organization. How, exactly, should I classify a link to, say, a page on the concept of the "simulacra" or to the classic phrase, "the annihilation of space and time?"[8] Both ideas could be interpreted to be an appropriate and relevant concept for nearly every era of technological innovation. Thus, my initial efforts to simply sort the discipline according to the chronology of techniques reiterated the important lesson that the more interpretive, more

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7. These pages can be found at http://polestar.facl.mcgill.ca/burnett/englishhome.html.

8. The origin of this phrase, according to Leo Marx, is a line of poetry by Alexander Pope (Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden,* London: Oxford, 1964, 194). It has subsequently been invoked to describe the impact of railroads and telegraphy in Marx (1964), James Carey (*Communication as Culture,* Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), and Stephen Kern (*The Culture of Time and Space,* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983).

theory-driven analyses were essential components if the site was to be comprehensive and *comprehensible.* So, ironically, the evolution of the Project, for me, also mirrored the evolution of the field itself. And inherent in that evolution is this caveat: the Media History Project, like the study of media history, is a work in progress. Both continue to remain dependent upon the efforts of scholars to guide students through the relevant associations, parallels, contradictions, and omissions that the site — and the field itself — may suggest.

Also, while writing an earlier version of this essay, I received an earnest email from a fellow who wanted to know if I could help him acquire a video from the 1974 Miss Teen USA Pageant. His wife, apparently, had been a participant. I pointed him in what I hope was the right direction. But this brings me to a second problem with regard to online publishing. In the current environment, in the mad rush to "get wired," the same processes of social conferral of legitimacy that we see with regard to both the printed word and the broadcast message are being reproduced and organized around new computerized publications. A web site in this context *is* a publication, and, in this context — and judging from the email I've received — I'm *perceived* to be an editor, a gatekeeper, a neighborhood expert, a "pundit," and, of course, a computer geek. Further, the fact of online publication seems to carry with it an implicit assumption about the legitimacy of online publications and their writers. So while the larger audience of the Project may, in fact, interpret its contents as accurate and factual, I simply don't have the time to do what good editors do: the fact checking. I can rely on colleagues to help locate superior resources and to assist with the "quality control" of the materials linked, but you all are busy, too, so this is hardly a fail-safe remedy to a potentially hazardous situation.[9]

Consequently, once again the site has taught me a lesson that media professionals — and symbolic interactionists — encountered long ago: an audience's perceptions of what one does may alter or condition what one sees *oneself* doing. My definitions of my role as the site's author have had to encompass many more titles than I set out to claim, and many of these are not at all within my expertise. Perhaps this is a "social fact," just a hazard of life when an individual believes herself to be operating autonomously when, in fact, she is engaging with and is interdependent upon the *social.* But I believe it is more than this. The fact of mediation heightens this tension between the creative-producer and the audience, and the demand to conform to social expectations seems qualitatively different in such a situation than in normal, day-to-day interactions. The weight of historical experiences with preceding media has its own kind of momentum, and that momentum is being applied directly to the Internet. At the least, the experience further dramatizes to me that the Internet is, indeed, a very good place to study media theory and media history

Finally, as a self-proclaimed computer geek who's been doing participant-observer research within virtual communities for four years, I'm

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9. This isn't just a problem with my site — this is endemic to any information on the Internet. There's information galore in cyberspace; the trouble is, much of it is quite probably unreliable.

finding some interesting social challenges arise from my involvement with the Web. Within some domains of Internet "insider" culture, the Web is viewed as the "killer application" that killed the "golden era" of cyberspace. This "golden era" (which exists in mythic form on nearly every newsgroup, at nearly every MUD, and on all sorts of older discussion lists) consisted of a time when only the real geeks — the real technical elite — knew of and used the computer networks.[10] They understood command-line computing (rather than point-and-click browsing), or if they didn't understand it, they knew to "RTFM" (read the f***ing manual) before they lost face and *asked for help.* Cyberspace, for these people, was a space in which, as Turkle (1984)[11] so persuasively argues, *mastery* of the technology was also a form of *social mastery.* But the old turf of these veterans has been invaded, as tens of thousands of new users venture online, oblivious to, unaffected by or disinterested in the pre-existing Net cultures and norms. The consequences? Some of the "insiders" are closing their borders, retreating into smaller and tighter groups of the technically sophisticated. I know of passport communities wherein you must know someone in order to gain entry, I have seen secret discourse communities that are resolved to keep the "newbies" or the "terminally uncool" out, and I have watched the disproportionate numbers of new users redefine and re-orient the online cultures in the directions of usability and commercialism.[12]

Consequently, as a geek who was once an insider but who has now become a webmaster, my own cultural currency within my former social groups online is somewhat diminished. My loyalties are suspect. Some of my old cohort from the command-line days scold my participation in the Web and its "idiotic" pointing-and-clicking; they maintain — and I'll confess to some persuasion in the argument — that ease of access is the chief way to insure poor quality participation. Some go as far as to suggest that all we get with the Web is the assurance that any dimwit with an ill conceived opinion now has a bully pulpit with which to jam the bandwidth and that we're better off making the Internet hard to use.

As should be obvious, this attitude contrasts rather sharply with the portrayal of Net insiders as rebellious, tolerant anarchists who defend everyone's right to have their say in cyberspace. And, as should also be obvious, the same attitude of hostility to the popularization of the Internet resembles (indeed, is consistent with) the sorts of criticisms one might make of, say, including a Godzilla-celebrating page on a scholarly, film history site. So the last consequence of this web site (and probably many others) that I'll remark upon is that it occupies and amplifies the historically contested terrain between high culture, popular culture, and lived experiences. The point of the Internet is not

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10. I am indebted to Stewart Hoover, who suggested this phenomenon of "theologizing" the past as a consistent and fascinating "use" of history among social groups on the Net and elsewhere.

11. Sherry Turkle, *The Second Self* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984).

12. Kristina Ross, "In Real life: A Case Study at a Virtual Community." Paper presented to the International Communication Association Annual Convention, Albuquerque, New Mexico, May 1995.

wholly or exclusively that it can deliver, with superior efficiency and depth, legitimized materials of intellectual substance. Indeed, the point — and the promise— of the Net may in fact be that it offers *quantity* participation, not just *quality* participation. Veteran Internet curmudgeons who despise the current popularity of the Web might be well advised to venture back out from their invisible enclaves to join the everyday, "unimportant," but equally vital chat that occurs among "the masses" online.

The Media History Project embraces the popular, caters to it, and even celebrates it, and I believe this is appropriate and pertinent to understanding media history, generally. However, I also expect to continue to receive some criticism and some praise for such transgressions as linking to an "interactive Ouija board." But I plan to hear either with an ear toward discourses of authority, legitimacy, and literacy. In the end, the site intends to challenge the various authorities of technical and literate expertise — challenges which I hope will not go unanswered or unabetted by collegial participation — and which I hope will invigorate the field of media history in the years to come.

The author is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication, University of Texas at El Paso.

18 Lists For Historians

H-Net has announced eighteen scholarly lists for historians. H-Net is an initiative of the history department at the University of Illinois, Chicago, to assist historians to go online, using their personal computers and the Internet and Bitnet networks.

It sponsors eighteen electronic discussion groups or "lists." Subscribers automatically receive messages in their computer mailboxes. The lists are like newsletters that are published daily; they have 3,000+ subscribers in thirty-five countries who receive an average of three messages a day. Membership is open to any scholar or graduate student, and is free. Each list in moderated by a historian and has a board of editors. The goal is to enable scholars to easily communicate current research and teaching interest; to discuss new approaches, methods, and tools of analysis; to share information on electronic databases and software; and to test new ideas.

1. *H-Albion* (British and Irish history)
2. *H-Amstdy* (American Studies)
3. *H-CivWar* (U.S. Civil War)
4. *H-Diplo* (diplomatic history, foreign affairs)
5. *H-_Durkhm* (social thought)
6. *H-Ethnic* (ethnic & immigration history)
7. *H-Judaic* (Judaica and Jewish Studies)
8. *H-Labor* (labor history),
9. *H-LatAm* (Latin American history)
10. *H-Law* (legal and Constitutional history)
11. *H-Pol* (U.S. political history)
12. *H-Rhetor* (history of rhetoric and communications)
13. *H-Rural* (rural and agricultural history)
14. *H-South* (U.S. South)
15. *H-Teach* (teaching college history)
16. *H-Urban* (urban history)
17. *H-Women* (women's history)
18. *Holocaus* (Holocaust studies; anti-Semitism).

To subscribe: send message to LISTSERV@UNICVM

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where xxxxxxxx = list name; for example, sub H-Diplo Leslie Smith, Southern Kansas U

If you use Internet send the message to: LISTSERV@unicvm.uic.edu

H-Net's considerable resources are available on the World Wide Web at: http://h-net.msu.edu/

H-Net's full list of email discussion lists is at: http://h-net2.msu.edu/lists/lists.cgi

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Roger M. Barrus and John Eastby, eds., ***America Through the Looking Glass: A Constitutionalist Critique of the 1992 Election.*** Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994. 300 pp. Cloth, $62.50. Paper, $24.95.

The impetus for this collection of essays was sound enough: Judge the strength of democratic life in the United States by putting the most recent presidential election to the test of constitution-mindedness. And there was enough drama during the campaigning to make such a test interesting at the very least, what with the sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll of Bill Clinton, the manic-depressive popularity of George Bush, and the now-you-see-me-now-you-don't candidacy of Ross Perot. Unfortunately, the resulting analyses are decidedly pedestrian, with no fresh insights into either the election or the current health of the democracy. For *America Through the Looking Glass*, the 1992 election was the fish that got away.

The editors, political scientists at Hampden-Sydney College, have arranged the contributions into three broad categories. The first part covers campaign methods, with chapters on politics as theater, television, and polling. The second part covers government institutions, with chapters on presidency, Congress, the Supreme Court, bureaucracy, and federalism. The third part, political issues, covers economics, religion, abortion, health care, environmentalism, women, and communitarianism.

The last sentences of the book summarize the message throughout:

> What is missing from contemporary American politics, as demonstrated by the 1992 campaign, is the statesman-like understanding that the proper role for presidential leadership in a time of profound change is neither to ignore the irrational hopes and fears of the people nor to enlist blindly in their service, but rather to seek to educate or discipline them. This must begin with the promotion, by salutary example, of respect for the forms and formalities of constitutional, representative democracy. (274)

Perot is dismissed as a demagogue, Bush is criticized for being disengaged, and Clinton is charged with saying whatever the voters wanted to hear. Each is a flawed candidate for the presidency, but more importantly, each highlights a significant threat to the Constitutional democracy. Perot would do away with the democratic process for the sake of pragmatism. Bush never learned to listen to the will of the people. And Clinton put so much stock in public opinion that he could never provide enlightened leadership.

As in all presidential elections, the media were integral in 1992. Talk shows became the *media franca* of the contest from Perot's announcement of his candidacy on *Larry King,* to Clinton playing his saxophone on *Arsenio Hall*, to the debate in Richmond, where the candidates were questioned by members of the studio audience rather than by members of the press. There was Clinton's appeal

to MTV viewers as well as his appearance with his wife on *60 Minutes,* in which they put his affair with Gennifer Flowers behind them, Perot's infomercials, and the ubiquitous polls. Even Vice President Dan Quayle entered the picture when he criticized the single motherhood on *Murphy Brown,* a show produced by Clinton supporters Linda Bloodworth-Thomason and Harry Thomason. Media issues rightly suffuse the book, but mostly to call forth the commonplace that broadcasting and polling tend to be so thoroughly self-serving that their usefulness to democracy is chimerical.

America Through the Looking Glass does offer a systematic postmortem of the 1992 presidential election. Its analyses are reasonable, its judgments sound, and its purview suitably thorough. But it is hardly enlightening. It serves more as a priest than a prophet, reminding us of what we already know rather than challenging us with fresh perspective.

John P. Ferré, University of Louisville

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John Chancellor and Walter Mears, ***The New News Business.*** Harper Collins: 1995. 194 pp. Paper, $10.

Imagine the queen of England being late for a ceremonial appearance because she's so engrossed in a BBC announcer's ad-libbed description of needlework. Such was the case, report the authors of this book, when legendary reporter Richard Dimbleby was announcing the queen's appearance at the Royal Needlework School in London. The queen was late for her arrival because she was so captivated by Dimbleby's commentary. Dimbleby made his mark by thorough preparation before such an event.

Anecdotes of this sort are peppered throughout this book of journalist "war stories." Former NBC anchorman John Chancellor and Associated Press Washington bureau chief Walter R. Mears draw upon four decades of fodder for the insights in this book. In narrative-descriptive style, the authors show how journalism's basic principles are applied in actual news settings. Evidence of the skilled storytelling talents of these two men is apparent in the conversational style of delivery.

Complex issues that are ignored by some basic introductory textbooks are addressed. An example is how to write a comprehensive lead when two major stories occur on the same day. To illustrate the resolution to this dilemma readers are taken back to when Ronald Reagan was sworn-in as President while the Iranian hostages were being released. Chancellor and Mears discuss the decision-making process involved in determining what event takes precedent in writing a lead for two major events of this nature.

While anecdotes are insightful and the demonstration of how to apply what is taught in class to the "real world" is useful, other areas of the book are problematic. Often the press is criticized for arrogance and self-aggrandizement. In public opinion polls the press is frequently viewed negatively by Americans.

Arrogance sometimes manifests itself in subtle forms. Tone and style are influences that have a bearing on a message. It isn't just what is said, but *how* it was said that is noticeable. That subtle arrogance in style and tone is found throughout the pages of this book.

When one has had access to presidents, prime ministers, members of Congress, and other influential persons for over forty years, it isn't easy to dismiss arrogance. Do journalists represent the average reader and viewer or are they part of the beltway mentality? Presidents come and go, Washington bureau chiefs and network news reporters stay. Which institution is more of the status quo?

These issues are not addressed in this book, but knowledgeable readers should take these thoughts into consideration when reading the criticism media insiders have to make about covering government. The Chancellor-Mears book can best be understood if read from a level deeper than the surface. Readers who put this work into a more critical perspective come away with a better understanding of how news judgments are made than those who take what the authors say at face value.

William G. Covington, Bridgewater State College, Massachusetts

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John Corner, ***Television Form and Public Address.*** New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995. 200 pp. Cloth, $59.95.

What is television, really? How does it communicate and with what impact? With these questions as a starting point, John Corner analyzes the medium in "Television Form and Public Address." Corner begins by acknowledging that his belief that television is a fascinating and important medium permeates both his book and his analysis. It is an analysis steeped in theory. Corner pays homage to the likes of Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, and John Fiske and their works.

Corner describes two possible interpretations for the use of "Public address" in his title. One is television as a sort of public address system, the other that the medium regularly addresses itself to matters of public concern. But what about a third interpretation, that of "address" as location? Does television tend to create a particular locale for the public, or the multitude of publics, somehow fixing them both temporally and spatially? Corner does not address that potential reading.

The phenomenon that is consistently superimposed on the book's pages is television's production of meaning. Corner notes that "meanings are not inherent properties of televised texts, they are instead the product of viewer interpretation working upon significations." In short, the production of meaning is an interactive process — television's publics interacting with the medium and its texts.

Stylistically, the book is excellent in its practice of previewing and summarizing chapters and sections. This helps the reader follow a sometimes complex and intricate narrative. Corner points out and explains in depth the "obvious." This is not necessarily a liability because often what seems apparent has become so accepted that reminders regarding a concept's origin or a technique being employed are useful. Phenomena are explained by sometimes placing them within a theoretical context for additional perspective.

Chapters examine television and its relationship to political order, news, documentary, advertising, effects, and "quality" as it relates to Policy. Corner makes many observations, often illustrating the extant tension in our field by juxtaposing works whose conclusions are in conflict. He raises many questions, but does not necessarily answer them. For example, in Chapter 2, he utilizes a 1953 study, "The Unique Perspective of Television and its Effect" — an analysis of television coverage of a tribute to General Douglas MacArthur in Chicago. Noting that because of the unique properties, i.e., form, of the medium — notably shot selection and the narrative which ensues — television transforms reality and consequently, the way it addresses its "publics." Corner reopens the debate about whether television hinders or aids the development of democratic politics. While probing arguments on both sides — thereby providing readers with their own analytical tools — Corner stops there, failing to offer his insight and conclusions. Certainly, exploring an issue by providing an updated synopsis of relevant scholarship is a valuable contribution. But such a presentation seems incomplete absent the presentation of some possible resolution.

Similarly, within his examination of advertising, after presenting several issues, Corner writes: "A perspective is needed which seeks critical dialogue with the professional discourses themselves as well as with consumers." But Corner does little to contribute to such a perspective. Again, this is not to assert that some issues simply do not lend themselves to closure and/or that recommendations for future work in areas themselves lack credibility. But nor is it unreasonable for the reader to hope for something beyond a compilation of observations, no matter how skillfully and insightfully they may be arranged.

Corner's dissection of advertising seems somewhat askew given the apparent underlying assumption embedded in his analysis: that in the course of watching of programs, television viewers seek out commercials. Unless a consumer is in the market for a particular product, most people do not typically look for advertisements. Research demonstrates, in fact, that with the popularization of the remote control device, commercial avoidance is not an unusual practice. As columnist-commentator George Will has observed, "Advertising is the background music of American life, a sort of audio wallpaper. It's there, but people don't notice it a good bit of the time." One would assume the same principle applies in Western cultures other than the United States.

Perhaps Corner's most cogent analysis is his treatment of what is most commonly referred to as the "effects tradition," an area in which he notes the

debate has been one of "restricted intellectual character." Corner admirably questions a host of assumptions in this area, including those the public seems to possess. Television's capacity to change attitudes or to trigger certain kinds of behavior is often attributed to its particular form. That is, television's ability to vividly portray events with realism and explicitness sometimes tend to create a sense that it is more influential than other media. Within a cultural context, however, an all-powerful perspective of any mediated message is attenuated. Corner notes that all television (and one would assume all media, for that matter) is potentially influential. In fact, he writes, television text virtually by definition cannot help but to influence. Corner uses the example of a televised weather forecast. While not all television form may lend itself to such a straightforward example, it serves to demonstrate that television typically changes the viewer's "knowledge environment," and may change behavior. The issue becomes, as Corner says, to move the debate away from whether there is influence to questions of kind and degree. Such analysis requires taking into account what particular texts mean to viewers, i.e., how meaning is created.

Corner concludes his book with a look at the quality of television and whether it reflects and/or contributes to an overall quality of life among the publics it addresses. While acknowledging the medium's negative cultural consequences — such as programming targeting the "lowest common denominator" — Corner reminds the reader that such criticism often stems from comparisons with more established cultural forms. To do so is "to miss recognizing the positive, dynamic forms of depiction and engagement and the sheer potential which television's expansive, dispersed and highly socialized modes of representation have generated." Similarly, attempts to measure television's "quality" — and, therefore, to formulate policy which ought to govern it — are often done so according to the values of a narrow elite which controls it and which has historically thought its tastes to be synonymous with quality. That policy aimed at producing "quality television" is desirable is not questioned. The challenge becomes, Corner implies, defining "quality" most appropriately.

In sum, in "Television Form and Public Address," television and several issues within it are analyzed from a critical perspective. The author does so largely by selectively presenting pertinent material, but nearly as often not providing closure through some sort of resolution or recommendation. Like the medium Corner analyzes, his book leaves the issues he explores "open-ended," with the reader free to interpret the text and to create meaning from it according to one's individual makeup. Unfortunately, not unlike a television viewer, the reader of this book may be left wanting a bit more.

Joseph A. Russomanno, Arizona State University

Bob Franklin, ***Packaging Politics: Political Communication In Britain's Media Democracy.*** London: Edward Arnold, 1994. 257 pp. Cloth, $19.95.

In reviewing political communications in Great Britain in the 1980s and 1990s, Bob Franklin concludes that politics has increasingly become a product to be packaged and sold in the marketplace. Politicians have come to believe that the media's presentation of their campaign is a key factor in the outcome of the election. As a result, more and more politicians have turned their attention to being sure that the media presents a positive picture of themselves and their platforms.

Franklin sees many reasons for the growing marketing of British politics. Most obvious is the desire of politicians to control negative political communications. Beyond this, politicians have accepted the fact of "the pervasive involvement of media in British political life"(5). Encouraging this development is the growing number of media outlets available in today's political arena. The result has been a growing effort on the part of political parties and their candidates to package themselves in a way that appeals more to the voters.

Franklin's study approaches his subject from a variety of viewpoints. He first analyzes the structure of the media, both print and broadcasting, in Britain. He describes their organization and how they are regulated and controlled by the government, as well as recent reforms and their results. He then proceeds to consider the various activities of political communicators, including central government news management and advertising for specific campaigns, local government news management efforts, and the use of media strategies by political parties, both nationally and at the local level. Much of this discussion is based on studies conducted by other people and capably summarized by Franklin. The result is an excellent overview of much of the recent work done in studying the interaction of the media and politicians in Great Britain over the past several decades.

Franklin's discussion reveals a misconception on the part of many people concerning the media and the political arena. The public imagines the relationship between politicians and the media as adversarial, but Franklin concludes that this is not necessarily true. He finds that both groups seek the cooperation of the other. Politicians need to get their message to the public, while journalists need sources of information. Conflicts exist, but "it is in the interests of both parties to negotiate and repair any breaches to re-establish a viable way of working together"(15-16). The goals of the two groups may be different, but they need each other in order to accomplish their own personal goals. As a result, the packaging of politicians is often encouraged by both sides. As the marketing of politicians increases, arguments have increased over whether this is a good development or not. Supporters affirm that the people know more about political issues and that they participate more in the political arena as a result, but Franklin questions the truth of these claims. Critics charge that packaging politics manipulates as much as it informs the public. Political

debate is simplified and trivialized and face-to-face encounters between politicians and citizens have greatly declined. Increasingly, the public's knowledge of politics comes only through the media. Rather than actively participating in the political arena, more and more people sit back and become passive receivers of information. Franklin concludes that this development is bad for the health of a democratic system.

Franklin ends his study with an overview of the impact of the packaging of politics on the public. He concludes that, while the results of studies are mixed, more and more people believe that the media, especially television, have a major impact on what people think and how they vote. As a result, the field is ripe for politicians to continue to "sell themselves" to the public through a packaged presentation of their ideas. Franklin believes that, whether for good or bad, the packaging of politics in Britain will continue to grow.

Franklin's study of the packaging of politics in Great Britain provides a good overview of much of the research done in this area over the past several decades. His conclusions warn of the possible negative impacts of the decline in direct participation by citizens of a democracy. Containing a wealth of information, Franklin's book should be given serious consideration by anyone interested in the impact and use of the media in the political arena.

Carol Sue Humphrey, Oklahoma Baptist University

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Joel C. Hodson, ***Lawrence of Arabia and American Culture: The Making of a Transatlantic Legend.*** Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995. 195 pp. Cloth, $45.

T.E. Lawrence, who once said his exploits in Arabia during World War I were "a sideshow of a sideshow," is probably better known today than any other combatant in the Great War and certainly more of a cultural icon than any of the heroes of World War I. Hodson, who draws on some of his previously published research for two of the book's eight chapters, begins with Lowell Thomas, who founded his journalistic career on the story of the young Englishman who molded a group of Arab tribesmen into an effective fighting force.

In January 1918, Thomas and his cameraman, Harry Chase, arrived in Egypt for what would lead to a relatively short stay in Arabia. Although Thomas claimed accreditation from several newspapers, Hodson in his meticulous research could find no evidence to support the claim. One of the more fascinating portions of the book is Hodson's recreation of the Thomas travelogue, "With Allenby in Palestine and Lawrence in Arabia." The performance, Hodson writes, "reached more people worldwide than any similar performance in history."

Lawrence would have become famous as a war hero despite Thomas, Hodson writes. But Thomas's lectures and his subsequent articles and books "propelled the young Englishman into the limelight and transformed him into a larger than life, modern-day crusader." In subsequent chapters, Hodson documents how the Lawrence legend was propagated and diffused through Thomas, books and articles, the "sun-and-sand" films of the 1920s starring actors like Rudolph Valentino, and a series of juvenile biographies.

By the time Columbia Pictures released Lawrence of Arabia in 1962, Hodson writes, "the Lawrence of Arabia story had become a small commercial industry." The film and Columbia's brazen promotion of it in women's and children's fashion, not to mention numerous toys and collections remain part of modern folklore about Lawrence. Although Hodson advances a number of reasons why Lawrence has long had a grip on popular imagination, he makes no attempt to generalize about how popular mythology is made, about how popular culture influences, shapes, and alters the images we have of people. This remains the work's most noticeable weakness.

Michael Buchholz, Indiana State University

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Brooke Kroeger, ***Nellie Bly: Daredevil, Reporter, Feminist.*** New York: Times Books/Random House, 1994. 631 pp. Paper, $15.

It is rare when so comprehensive a book comes along on so scarcely researched a topic, but that is what Brooke Kroeger delivers with *Nellie Bly.* She gives us a masterpiece so thoroughly researched and so vivid in detail that it leaves the reader believing no stone has been left unturned, no record left unchecked, no evidence carelessly tossed aside on Elizabeth Cochrane, the woman who wrote under the byline "Nellie Bly."

Kroeger has compiled reams of archival and court documents, relevant birth, military, military intelligence, and death records, more than six hundred newspaper or magazine articles by Bly and hundreds of others either about her or of direct relevance to her story. She has made use of biographical sketches, Bly's three works of fiction, plus her one novel and interviewed her last living links. Kroeger calls her efforts "paltry" compared with other biographers, but looking at the dearth of previous research, she is clearly being modest. The Library of Congress does not list any documented biographies of Nellie Bly and there isn't a single doctoral dissertation about her listed in any of the national computer databases. What little does exist are either short excerpts from encyclopedias, juvenile biographies, or biographies based on almost no primary sources. Because of this, Bly's place in journalism history occupies a thin and clouded space where fantasy and fiction have been allowed to run free, obscuring her very real and lasting contribution to journalism.

Kroeger takes us back to a time when the woman's movement was just getting started. The status of women had begun to change in all areas except

politics. Schools and colleges were beginning to open up, progressive married women's property laws had been passed, and magazines directed specifically at women advocated advances on all issues except suffrage. Women's lives were undergoing a metamorphosis, and every aspect was news: changing fashions, greater job opportunities, political developments, and moral reform. Kroeger uses Bly's life to lead us through these changes and reveals how the writer was at the vanguard of this movement. As Bly herself tell us, "The new American woman can accommodate herself to any circumstance without the aid of a man."

Bly's life, 1864 to 1922, stretched from the Reconstruction, Victorian, and Progressive eras to the Great War and its aftermath. All of these had a profound effect on Bly's life, but none more so than the Progressive school of thought. Its practitioners believed the media's role in society was to promote liberal social and economic causes in the fight against big business and government. Much like public journalism today, adherents to progressive thought wrote stories from the perspective of the masses or working people in their quest for civil reform, democracy, and equality in the face of the repressive wealthy class.

Bly was an exemplar for this kind of journalism. After a short stint at the *Pittsburgh Dispatch* she made a name for herself at Pulitzer's *New York World* in 1887-88. Bly's first story, an expose of Blackwell Island, propelled her into the national spotlight. She tricked doctors into believing she was insane, then spent ten days at the Blackwell insane asylum for women. There, she exposed the horrible conditions and treatment for patients by both the nursing staff and doctors. After her three-part series hit the newsstands the New York Department of Public Charities and Corrections budget went from $1.5 million in 1887 to more than $2.64 million in 1888.

Bly continued to write stories about the disenfranchised throughout her life. She covered women workers in a jar factory (1885), the poor and destitute of New York (1890), and in particular, orphaned children (1891-1922). Many of these well-meaning stories often got lost in the sensationalist slugfest between Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst. Bly's most famous story was published in 1889-90 when she was sent around the world in pursuit of Jules Verne's fictitious Phileas Fogg. The idea was to circumvent the globe in less than the eighty days it took the character in Verne's book. It was on this journey that Kroeger reveals a small reflection of the persona that Bly cultivated with her audience. She often attempted to astound people by telling them all she had accomplished at so young an age. Birth records indicate that Bly was twenty-seven at the time of the journey, but on her passport Bly noted that she was just twenty-two.

Before her life ended, Bly was a factory owner with twenty-five patents to her credit. She employed fifteen hundred workers at her "Iron Clad" company that produced everything from milk cans to kitchen sinks. Her factory was so progressive it boasted a full recreational center furnished with showers, an entertainment hall, canteen, and even a bowling alley. She was a war correspondent in Austria and Serbia during World War I and many of her stories echoed the haunting poetry of Wilfred Owen. Nothing seemed out of reach for

this woman who is portrayed by Kroeger, warts and all, as a Renaissance figure. In writing the book Kroeger seems to take Bly's axiom of life to heart, "energy rightly applied and directed will accomplish anything."

Kroeger, a reporter and editor for *New York Newsday,* has traveled the world as a foreign correspondent. She was influenced by the stories of Bly as a child and this monumental effort grew out of a desire to share the life of women pioneers with her daughter. Now all of us can share in Kroeger's and Bly's indefatigability, curiosity, pluck and pizazz.

Richard A. Phelan,University of South Carolina

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John C. Nerone, ed., ***Last Rights: Revisiting*** **Four Theories of the Press.** Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995. 205 pp. Cloth, $29.95. Paper, $12.95.

Taking potshots at the "most famous product" of the University of Illinois College of Communications is not an arduous task. In fact, the authors of *Last Rights* remind readers that generations of communication faculty have used Four Theories of the Press not only as a useful text but also as a "whipping boy."

Yet, the writers of *Last Rights* resist the temptation to dismiss the dated text whole cloth and instead thoughtfully reconsider the continued relevance of *Four Theories.* As an entry into their critique, they offer readers an understanding of the historical context which framed the construction of the best-selling nonfiction text published to date by the University of Illinois press.

The authors suggest that driven by the cold war political agenda, *Four Theories* provided an intellectual justification to support the notion of a free and socially responsible press. Couched as a product of value-free scholarship, the ideologically constructed text supported the United States industrial capitalist model of the media, illustrated connections between the academy and business, and provided a relevant example of administrative research.

In their detailed critiques of the Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility, and Soviet Communist theories, the authors of Last Rights maintain that only Libertarian and Social Responsibility theories were seriously considered in *Four Theories.* Written from a philosophical position of Classical Liberalism, *Four Theories* assumed press freedom was essential to the maintenance of a Democratic society and therefore rejected any type of governmental regulation or control. Authoritarian and Soviet Communist theories were positioned as "evil twins" that were easily dismissed as "straw men." Soviet Communist theory, seen as Authoritarianism run amuck, conflated Marxism with Stalinism and thus was efficiently discredited. While these authors tend to question the validity of such a strategy, given the cultural milieu during the McCarthy era such a tactic should not seem the least bit surprising.

Illustrating how key aspects of Libertarian and Social Responsibility theory had been confused, simplified, and/or omitted in *Four Theories of the Press,* these authors focus on the diversity of liberal thought from both a contemporary and historical perspective. Their nuanced discussion helps readers to understand the sometimes subtle distinctions between Neoliberalism, Egalitarianism, and Communitarianism. *Last Rights'* eight University of Illinois contributors, William E. Berry, Sandra Braman, Clifford Christians, Thomas G. Guback, Steven J. Helle, Louis W. Liebovich, John C. Nerone, and Kim B. Rotzoll come from varied backgrounds which include advertising, communication theory, ethics, history, journalism, law, and political economics. Unfortunately, while each author retains some understanding of freedom and democracy, their individual philosophical orientations in Communitarianism, Liberal Democracy, Libertarianism, Marxism, and Radical Democracy, forestall going beyond a critique of *Four Theories of the Press* to construct a unified conception of what normative press theory might include.

While these writers admit that they fall short of mapping the new terrain, they do suggest that a contemporary version of normative press theory must address the rights of both groups and individuals, question the relationship between political movements and economic structures, and consider both the public and the private realms. Overall, *Last Rights* offers an insightful look at a classic text. Perhaps the authors' inability to come to a consensus on normative press theory also provides the text's own historical context illustrating the fragmentation of left thought in contemporary U.S. society.

Bonnie Brennen, State University of New York — Geneseo

•

Kathryn S. Olmsted, ***Challenging the Secret Government: The Post-Watergate Investigations of the CIA and FBI.*** Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 272 pp. Cloth, $34.95. Paper, $15.95.

In 1976, Daniel Schorr, then a correspondent for CBS, found himself in possession of the entire Pike report, the discoveries and recommendations of a congressional investigation headed by Representative Otis Pike of New York into the illegal, unauthorized activities of the Central Intelligence Agency and other intelligence-gathering agencies over the past several decades. The report was hard hitting. It discussed the intelligence community's spending practices, its failure to predict crises and the risks it posed to the American people. It described and evaluated recent covert actions in Italy and Angola. It noted that the CIA spied on dissidents on U.S. college campuses. And it laid the blame not on rogue agencies run wild but on the executive branch of government, particularly the White House.

Indeed, the report revealed so much that the Ford Administration successfully maneuvered to suppress its release. To strike a blow for what he saw as the public's right to know, Schorr decided to publicize the report on his

own. Failing to interest his employer CBS in airing the report or in attracting a book publisher to print it in its entirety, Schorr leaked the report to the *Village Voice,* a well established alternative newspaper in New York City. He also decided to keep his role in the leak secret — to protect his source, he later claimed.

The attempt at secrecy was a mistake. When the *Voice* published the report under the title "The CIA Report the President Doesn't Want You to Read," Schorr's role emerged and he was harshly criticized not just by the Ford Administration but by his colleagues in journalism as well. The *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* — the newspapers which had first published the purloined secret Pentagon Papers — condemned "leaked reports." *Newsweek* questioned Schorr's ethics. CBS fired him. Few newspapers commented on the shocking revelations of CIA perfidy found in the report itself.

If the picture of the national news media castigating a colleague for revealing embarrassing government secrets seems incongruous with the image of a monolithic news media fearlessly exposing institutional wrongdoing in the post-Watergate period, historian Kathryn Olmstead convincingly demonstrates in her book that the image of the crusading post-Watergate press is a myth. In this clearly written, well researched, and excellently documented study, Olmstead shows that even at the height of its so-called power, when, according to the conventional wisdom the press had the strength to bring down Richard Nixon, the majority of the press was timid, obsequious, and easily manipulated by governmental officials.

Of course, scholars from Edward Jay Epstein to Michael Schudson have questioned the role the press actually played in the Watergate revelations. Olmstead powerfully argues that in the wake of Watergate, the press was afraid of looking too adversarial and irresponsible to successfully challenge the official Washington.

Olmstead's aim to capture a particular moment in American history, but her account of the media's role in the investigations into the "National Security State" in the mid-1970s presents a great deal of fodder for students of journalism and presents a suitably complex picture of the role of the press in contemporary Washington. For example, the impetus to launch Congressional investigations into the intelligence community was Seymour Hersh's exposé of domestic spying by the CIA. Hersh's reporting, in turn, was based on an internal report ordered by Director of Central Intelligence James Schlesinger after he had read in the newspaper that the CIA. had been implicated in Watergate. But while the Congress responded to Hersh's stories by launching investigations, many in the press condemned Hersh's reporting, though its accuracy was later vindicated.

In addition to the broad and damning picture of the role of the national media in Washington matters, Olmstead reveals specific incidents which sharply call into question the self perception of journalists as watchdogs on government. For example, President Ford apparently inadvertently told top editors of the *New York Times* that the CIA had plotted to assassinate foreign leaders. The editors kept the information confidential. Virtually the entire mainstream press,

including the *Los Angeles Times,* the *New York Times,* and the *Washington Post,* agreed not to report on a $350 million CIA boondoggle intended to salvage a sunken Soviet spy sub until Jack Anderson broke the story. When Henry Kissinger was treated roughly by the Pike committee, *New York Times'* columnist James Reston called to berate the committee's chief counsel.

According to Olmstead's account of these investigations, the national media does play a powerful role in Washington, though not as watchdogs. The media is the milieu in which policy and political battles are fought. The side most adroit at projecting their perspective generally prevails. It is not a coincidence, she notes, that Henry Kissinger spent as much as half of his waking hours working the press.

Though not intended as a history of the press, *Challenging the Secret Government* makes a valuable contribution to an understanding of the press in the contemporary period. It successfully punctures the myth of the aggressive post-Watergate press, a myth the press itself seems to still believe, at least in retrospect. The picture which replaces the myth is much less flattering.

Elliot King, Loyola College in Maryland

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Sam G. Riley, ***Biographical Dictionary of American Newspaper Columnists.*** Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995. 412 pp. Cloth, $79.50.

Sam G. Riley of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University has assembled biographies of six-hundred newspaper columnists, both famous and not-so-famous, syndicated and nonsyndicated, dating from the days of the first newspaper columnists in the Civil War era to the present. Each entry includes a brief account of the columnist's career and writings, a list of the writer's book-length works, and a reference list. Lesser-known columnists get four or five paragraphs at the most; the titans of the field — the Walter Lippmanns and Heywood Brouns — are accorded one to two pages.

Entries are both readable and succinct, admirable qualities for a biographical dictionary. For each columnist, Riley includes some description of writing style and content, not in great detail but enough to convey each writer's genre and specialty. Included also is description of the career path that led each writer to become a columnist; most began as reporters.

The book's strength is its eclecticism: Riley has assembled biographies of many local columnists as well as those who are nationally known. These columnists were selected upon the advice of journalism professors around the country and from suggestions by the columnists themselves. Accordingly, even writers from small and midsize newspapers get their due. Riley includes past or present columnists from newspapers in Fresno, Little Rock, Albuquerque, Bloomington, Roanoke, St. Paul, Greensboro, and Charlotte, to cite a few examples.

Moreover, he concentrates not only on the ubiquitous political columnist but on journalists far removed from the Washington Beltway writing on other topics of general interest. Advice writer Ann Landers has a place here, as does gossip columnist Louella Parsons and crime writer Jay Robert Nash. Even John Bloom, who wrote his *Dallas Times-Herald* column as outrageous redneck Joe Bob Briggs, gets an entry. To its credit, the book excludes columnists on highly specialized subjects such as bridge, chess, gardening, astrology, computers, and the like.

John S. Knight, the newspaper publisher who also wrote a column, "The Editor's Notebook," is also included here, as are many others who were columnists for a time but were better known for their other pursuits, such as James Thurber, William Randolph Hearst, and H.L. Mencken. Famous and lesser-known women and minority columnists from the nineteenth century are also included here. Jane Cunningham Croly's career at the *New York Tribune* writing under the pen name Jennie June is described, as is pioneering black columnist Gertrude Bustill Mossell. Mossell wrote about race and women's issues for the *New York Age* and other newspapers beginning in 1885.

Riley, whose previous books include a compilation of the work of local newspaper columnists and guides to Southern, British, corporate, and regional magazines, has written a useful and complete reference work. Scholars will especially appreciate the bibliographies and references for each columnist.

David R. Davies, University of Southern Mississippi

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Larry Sabato and S. Robert Lichter, ***When Should the Watchdogs Bark: Media Coverage of the Clinton Scandals.*** Washington, D.C.: Center for Media and Public Affairs, 1994. 127 pp. Paper, $12.95.

Recently, the Center for Media and Public Affairs (CMPA) added a new link to their home page on the World Wide Web. The link connects to a page devoted to the book, *When Should the watchdogs Bark.* Apparently, the Center is seeking an alternative way to get the word out on the issue of media coverage of politicians' peccadilloes.

The book purports to be an investigation of press reluctance to cover the personal scandal stories that have dogged President Bill Clinton throughout his term in office. Researchers Larry Sabato, Professor of Government and Foreign Affairs at the University of Virginia, and S. Robert Lichter, codirector of the CMPA, seek to determine whether the press required a higher standard of proof for reporting on sex scandals than it did for reporting on coverage of financial scandals such as Whitewater.

To answer their question, the authors interviewed thirty-six major media journalists, most of whom had been directly involved in covering the scandals and they conducted a content analysis of 311 television stories about Whitewater, the so-called Troopergate scandal and the sexual harassment lawsuit filed by

Paula Corbin Jones. Additionally, they qualitatively examined 1,235 print stories on these issues from the *New York Times, Washington Post, Washington Times, Los Angeles Times, Time, Newsweek* and *U.S. News and World Report.* They provide a chart counting the number of allegations covered by topic and a chart of good/bad press.

Had the study been confined to these forms of evidence, it might have appeared more credible. Inexplicably, however, the authors add a series of addenda or sidebars, including a number of articles based on reports from the conservative magazine, the *American Spectator,* headlines from the conservative *Washington Times,* and from the British tabloid press plus a sampler of irreverent jokes told by comedians Jay Leno and David Letterman. These sidebars comprise fully half the pages of the book.

The text itself is hardly neutral; it seem as though every comment that looks upon Clinton in a positive or sympathetic light is rebutted by a self-described conservative political reporter or commentator such as the *Standard's* Fred Barnes, *American Broadcasting's* White House reporter Brit Hume, or the *American Spectator's* David Brock. The whole effort reeks of conservative partisanship.

One might reasonably ask, aside from fair warning, why such a contemporary polemic deserves scrutiny in *American Journalism,* a journal of press history. First, precisely because it is such an ahistoric effort. The evidence that is brought forward lacks historical context. Sabato and Lichter confine themselves to the Clinton scandals. If we are to believe, as the authors suggest, that reportorial behavior is somehow different when it comes to sex-scandal reporting, they are obliged to provide evidence outside of the issues in question. If they felt there was inadequate coverage of the presidency before Clinton, they might have looked at the misadventures of candidate Gary Hart, Representative Wilbur Mills, and any number of other Congressmen. Without precedents, we are unable to determine if reportorial squeamishness is (as implied) indicative of favoritism or just an example of traditional respectful behavior.

Moreover, this book again stirs the waters that Professor Sabato has so successfully roiled before. He has been one of our nation's most visible and most persistent critics of political news coverage. His influence, most notably with the 1991 analysis, *Feeding Frenzy,* has literally transformed the political-media dialogue. It may be time for historians to examine Sabato's body of work and begin to evaluate his place in the larger political milieu.

Alan Fried, University of South Carolina

Short Takes

William J. Gonzenbach, ***The Media, the President, and Public Opinion: A Longitudinal Analysis of the Drug Issue, 1984-1991.*** Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1996. 117 pp. Cloth, $34.50. Paper, $17.50.

Gonzenbach relies on and builds on agenda setting research and methodology "to determine how drug-related issues and events, both real and fabricated, and the primary agendas drove the (drug) issue over time." He looks at how the media "structure interpretations of drug issues and events, how the President framed the issues and events, how the agendas of the media, the president, and the public interacted and affected public policy, and differences between Reagan and Bush presidencies. In the process, Gonzenbach documents the cyclical nature of the drug issue as a public problem. Perhaps because it employs different methodology and is grounded in different epistemology, Gonzenbach neither acknowledges nor mentions in his "References" list the 1994 Campbell-Reeves study of the same topic *Cracked Coverage: Television News, the Anti-Cocaine Crusade, and the Reagan Legacy* (Duke University Press).

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Craig L. LaMay and Everette E. Dennis, eds., ***The Culture of Crime.*** New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1995. 196 pp. Paper, $18.95. Originally published in the *Media Studies Journal,* winter, 1992.

The editors try to shed some light on "the most common and least studied staple of news" by providing nineteen commentaries and research essays dealing with crime and the media. Journalism historians who missed this material when it first appeared in the *Media Studies Journal* in 1992 will find several selections of particular interest, including American Studies scholar Elliott Gorn's look at the *National Police Gazette* in the 1870s and 1880s, and historian Richard Maxwell Brown's "Desperadoes and Lawmen: The Folk Hero." In a critique of insipid crime reporting, "The Reporter I: Cops, Killers and Crispy Critters," David Simon, *Baltimore Sun* police reporter and author of *Homicide: A Year on the Killing Streets,* calls for more "narrative journalism" (what some would call literary journalism) and cites the work of Damon Runyon, Frank O'Malley and Herbert Bayard Swope. In an interview, Elmore Leonard talks about the influence of journalism and Hollywood on his fiction. The concluding chapter, a review essay by Robert W. Snyder, considers five books, including Jacob Riis' *How the Other Half Lives* and *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens.*

John C. Merrill, ***Existential Journalism.*** Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1996. First published 1977. 136 pp. Paper, $24.95.

This revised edition of Merrill's philosophical look at journalistic freedom and responsibility — and his call for more individual, personal freedom for journalists — contains a foreword by Everette Dennis of the Freedom Forum Media Studies Center and an introduction by Fred Blevins of Texas A & M and Kyle Cole of Baylor. These and Merrill's opening chapter and postscript place Merrill's ideas within the 1990s journalistic context. Merrill also acknowledges the ideas and movement that have emerged since 1977 that challenge his contentions, particularly the thinking of Christians and MacIntyre. But as Merrill says, the book is essentially the same as the one published in 1977. That includes the book's bibliography, which has not been updated and contains no references to works by the likes of Christians or MacIntyre or to those who agree with Merrill and have built on his ideas and have published since the mid-1970s.

•

Jeffery J. Mondak, ***Nothing to Read: Newspapers and Elections in a Social Experiment.*** Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995. 191 pp. Cloth, $39.50. Paper, $16.95.

Mondak, a University of Pittsburgh political scientist, looks at the role of newspapers in disseminating campaign information and the effect of that information on voting behavior. He compares two cities with very similar demographics, Pittsburgh and Cleveland, during the 1992 election campaign. Because the newspapers in Pittsburgh were on strike, Mondak was presented with a remarkable situation for comparison and contrast. He uses what he calls a "quasiexperimental" methodology that combines "elements of opinion survey and the laboratory experiment." The study shows how many voters are active in seeking out information when the newspaper is not available, and affirms the important role newspapers play in informing voters, particularly in congressional races.

•

Dan Steinbock, ***Triumph & Erosion in the American Media & Entertainment Industries.*** Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1995. 352 pp. Cloth, $75.

Steinbock, a Finnish scholar who researched his topic with a Fullbright postdoctorate fellowship, focuses on the competitiveness of the mass media and economic forces that shape them. He tries to understand how the American mass media and entertainment industries have moved from "global ascendancy" to a

condition of "instability and uncertainty." For instance, his introduction has sections that consider supply-side economics, deregulation, and the banking industry. Part I looks at the decline of the television networks and the rise of cable, as well as the nature of the giant conglomerates. Part II deals with media convergence and is titled "Toward Electronic Superhighways." Although the focus is on the 1980s and early 1990s, some early media economic history is briefly considered.

•

Mark N. Trahant, ***Pictures of Our Nobler Selves: A History of Native American Contributions to News Media.*** Nashville: The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center, 1995. 45 pp. Paper, free.

Trahant, a Shoshone-Bannock and executive news editor *of The Salt Lake Tribune,* makes a brief foray into identifying and documenting significant American Indian journalists. Trahant begins with an anecdote showing how in 1989 Hattie Kauffman became the first Native American to report a news story to a national audience when she covered a plane crash for ABC Evening News. He then moves back to the 1820s to *The Cherokee Pheonix* and its editor Elias Boudinot. After Boudinot, Trahant covers several publications, personalities, and about one hundred fifty years, showing how Native American reporters more recently have influenced coverage.

Errata

Gary Whitby would like to make the following corrections in footnote 21 of his piece in the volumer 9, number 1-2 issue of *American Journalism:*

(1) Omit paragraphs one and two.
(2) Revise paragraph three to read:

> Romanticism as a movement bore the following characteristics, among others: "sensibility; primitivism; love of nature; . . . mysticism; individualism; . . . the idealization of rural life . . . ; unrestrained imagination; [and] . . . interest in human rights . . ." (See Holman and Harmon, 441).

(3) Continue with remainder of footnote as is.

Changes were necessitated, Whitby said, by an oversight on his part and not on the part of the editor.

(Continued from inside front cover)

Those who wish to review books for *American Journalism* or propose a book for review should contact Professor David Spencer at Graduate School of Journalism, University of Ontario, London Ontario, Canada, N6A 5B7.

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- "'Typical Slime By Joe McCarthy': Ralph McGill and Anti-McCarthyism in the South
- "'Right in the Führer's Face': American Editorial Cartoons of the World War II Period

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From the Editor's Desk...

A CORRESPONDENT WRITES: "I came across your review of the (Eric) Sevareid biography (in *Journalism Quarterly*) in which you mention asking your reporting class to identify him." (None of the students could do so.) "Try this: I asked a selected group of men and women, most with journalism degrees, if they had heard of Lincoln Steffens. None of the 15 had." And further, "Not only do they not know our heritage, they don't know much beyond the last few years."

As Linda Ellerbee used to say, and so it goes. The teaching of professional courses as well as media history is made difficult by the lack of historical consciousness on the part of students. One might concede that it is too high an expectation to assume that journalism wannabees know the leaders of the field, in the historical sense, when they enter journalism school. But when the knowledge of American history and some smattering of matters beyond the nation's borders is missing from their heads, who are we to blame or run to for solice and assistance? And if we can "blame" some group for this void, can we thus ignore the fabric of history in teaching the profession or its history? Of course not. We'll have to do it ourselves.

But our correspondent has also thrown down the gauntlet. "I wonder whether you'd care to identify some of those you consider our 'giants,' to use your word....And by 'giants' I mean working reporters, men and women who covered the news." For good measure, he rightly urges that we must show students the contribution of these giants to the journalism culture.

We have put the letter aside a dozen times, scratching a name or two in the margin each time, challenged and intimidated by the task. Who are these people — like Eric Sevareid, the proximate cause of our anxiety — who made a difference in the profession of journalism that we should recommend to the next generation?

The floor is open for nominations.

WBE

Who Seeks the Truth Should be of No Country: British and American Journalists Report the Boxer Rebellion, June 1900

By Jane Elliott

In terms of accurate factual reporting of the initial stages of the China crisis in 1900, The Times *provided its readers with highly colored, emotive, and inaccurate reporting. By contrast, the* New York World *showed exemplary standards of reporting of a contentious event in an almost inaccessible country.*

Overnight the drama of a Chinese peasant rebellion swept the news of the Boer War and the Philippine Insurrection from the front page headlines in Britain and America. Groups of Chinese peasants had begun organizing and drilling[1] in a movement which had taken shape as the Boxer Rebellion by 1899. Factors which had incited the peasant insurrection included anger at European encroachment on Chinese territory,[2] resentment of the spread of Christian missionary influence, unemployment as a result of increasingly mechanised transport, mass discharging of soldiers after the Sino-Japanese War and structural changes in various Chinese armies, widespread flooding, and

1. While there were superstitious elements to Boxer drill, the military history of nineteenth century China is replete with examples of well-trained gentry-led militia. These were recruited from the peasantry for training. See Franz Michael, "Military Organization and Power Structure of China During the Taiping Rebellion," *Pacific Historical Review* 18 (1949): 469-483.

2. In reprisal for the deaths of two German missionaries, Germany occupied a part of Shandong province in November 1897. This was a particular affront to the Chinese because Shandong is the birth place of Confucius.

prolonged drought. The more celebrated catch-cry of the Boxers was "Uphold the dynasty! Expell the foreigners!"

The movement started in Shandong Province in North China, spread rapidly and reached Beijing (Peking) in May 1900. Large numbers of Boxers in loose units roamed and drilled in the streets of Beijing, a menace equally to those Chinese who were associated with foreigners as they were to the foreigners themselves. On 16 June foreign telegraphic communication with the outside world was cut and on 20 June, the Boxers laid siege to the foreign ministries in Beijing. The Boxers were joined by Chinese Muslim troops — also feared by many Chinese residents of Beijing — and soldiers of the Imperial army. The siege lasted for fifty-five days until it was broken by an eight-nation, 20,000 strong force on 14 August.[3]

An analysis of a number of newspapers reporting the Boxer crisis in Britain, America, Hong Kong, and English-language newspapers in China itself yields unexpected results. Accuracy of news coverage, emotive pejorative language in the reporting, and the portrayal of China as an independent, responsible political entity were not predictable characteristics of press coverage according to which end of the sociopolitical spectrum the papers served. Although America's foreign policy and trade concerns in China were quite different from those of Britain, there were strong similarities between some sections of the British and American press as they reported the Boxer Rebellion.

This article does not set out to study the coverage of the Boxer Rebellion in the context of empire or race. Rather, the views of empire and trade being constant across different social classes in variously influencing national attitudes towards race, the interest here is the extent to which journalists were able to report events outside these stereotypes. Given the range of national and social class perspectives of the readership of Western newspapers covering events in China, this study presents evidence to show that accuracy and responsibility in reporting were not necessarily the exclusive hall-mark of the "stately-press."[4] The corollary of this also held true. Sensational reporting and colored language were not necessarily the distinguishing characteristics of the mass-circulation newspapers as they reported a stirring event in an exotic, remote, almost inaccessible country. This article aims to evaluate the contribution made by the reporting of the second phase of Boxer Rebellion to public images of China held by people from a wide social spectrum in the two major English-speaking countries of the day.

Perceptions of China varied on either side of the Atlantic for a number of reasons. Nevertheless, a detailed reading of the press coverage of the Boxer

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3. Joseph W. Esherick's book, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (Berkely: University of California Press, 1987), is the authority on the subject. For a survey of Chinese scholarship on the Boxer Rebellion, see David D. Buck, ed., *Recent Studies of the Boxer Movement: Chinese Studies in History* 20 (spring-summer 1987).

4. J.D. Startt, *Journalists for Empire: The Imperial Debate in the Edwardian Stately Press, 1903-1913* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991). Professor Startt uses the term "stately" press to describe such papers as *The Times*, the *Westminster Gazette*, the *Spectator*, and the *Observer*.

Rebellion shows important similarities between the *London Daily Mail* and the *New York World* as well as between the *Westminster Gazette* and the *Chicago Daily News*. These similarities reflect a high standard of responsible journalism in newspapers catering to a wide public in Britain and America. It is when we turn to the coverage of this event by *The Times* of London, however, that major differences appear between British and American views of China and, more important for the present argument, between British and American views of what constituted responsible journalism.

To evaluate the degree of responsibility displayed by British and American press coverage of the highly-charged events of 1900 in China, a useful approach seemed to be to concentrate on in-depth analysis of two newspapers rather than piecemeal selections from a large number of papers.[5] Turn-of-the-century sensitivity to the standards and work of the mass-circulation press[6] led to the choice of the *New York World* as arguably the best representative of the yellow press.[7] At the other end of the sociopolitical spectrum, *The Times* was chosen because of its position as the newspaper with the highest reputation of those papers comprising the "stately-press" and because of its influence on the formation of British government policy. The question of the influence of the reporting of the Boxer crisis on the formation of government policy and public opinion regarding China and Japan lies beyond the immediate scope of this article. It is a question which must at least be raised in the context of a discussion of press responsibility.

Having selected *The Times* and the *New York World*, it was also necessary to delineate that period of the Boxer crisis most appropriate for analysis. The events divided into a first phase before the involvement of foreign troops in June 1900, a second phase of six weeks in June and July 1900 when the Chinese forces had ascendancy over the allied invaders, a third phase of four weeks during which the allies tried to assemble sufficient troops to march on Beijing, and a fourth phase in which Beijing was taken and attempts were made to begin negotiating a punitive indemnity against the background of reckless raping, looting, and indiscriminate shooting of Chinese citizens by allied troops.[8]

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5. The newspapers initially reviewed for the research base of this study were *The Times, Westminster Gazette, Spectator, Daily Mail, Illustrated London News, Review of Reviews, Chicago Daily News, New York World, Nation, San Francisco Examiner, North-China Herald, Peking and Tientsin Times, China Mail, Shanghai Mercury*, and *Hong Kong Daily Press*.

6. See *Review of Reviews*, May 1900, 420-33, for an article on Cyril Arthur Pearson, founder of the *Daily Express*. See also J. D. Startt, "Good Journalism in the Era of the New Journalism: The British Press, 1902 - 1914," in Joel H. Wiener, ed., *Papers for the Millions: The New Journalism in Britain, 1850s to 1914* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988).

7. The latest study in the well-documented field of scholarship on Joseph Pulitzer is Paul H. Weaver, *News and the Culture of Lying*, (New York: Free Press, 1994).

8. Of all the foreign journalists who noted the regrettable behavior of the invading troops, George Lynch's accounts are the most poignant. See Lynch, *The War of the Civilisations: Being a Record of a "Foreign Devil's" Experiences with the Allies in*

Both the British and American press viewed China as a decaying, moribund empire fit only for division by the vigorous nations of the West. Broad sections of the Chinese population were aware of this view and resented it intensely.[9] In this context, the reporting of the six weeks of the campaign in which the Chinese were clearly defeating most allied initiatives[10] — the second phase of the Boxer crises — constituted the best test of the ability of the Western press to report these military successes. Previous press reporting had established an image of China that precluded the possibility of any real military preparedness or fighting ability. Moreover, the British and Americans were also involved in other major wars in 1900, notably the Boer War[11] and the Spanish-American War in Cuba and the Philippines. The magnitude of the furor over the Boxer crisis eclipsed press coverage of the Boer War and provided a highly-charged crucible in which to make a comparative evaluation of the standards of the British and American press of the day.

The Boxer Rebellion was not just another Chinese peasant insurrection. Before it occurred, the Western press was discussing the division of China,[12] and various countries had already claimed spheres of influence with special rights over Chinese territory. After the rebellion, the talk of slicing China like a melon was heard no more.

China (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1901), 39, 46, 49, 142, 182. The American photographer James Ricalton photographed the corpses of Chinese civilians, attributing these deaths without hesitation to the invading forces and noting their adherence to the Christian religion in this context. See C. J. Lucas, ed., *James Ricalton's Photographs of China During the Boxer Rebellion. His Illustrated Travelogue of 1900* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1900), 163-164.

9. For evidence of the Chinese reaction to discussions in the Western press and widely-read accounts of China such as that by Lord Charles Beresford, *The Break-Up of China* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1899), see George Lanning, *Old Forces in New China* (London: Probsthain, 1912), 140, 148 and 150-1 and Chester C. Tan, *The Boxer Catastrophe* (New York: Octagon Books Inc, 1967), 14.

10. The Chinese only lost one battle in the first six weeks after foreign intervention in the Boxer crisis. This resulted in the capture of the Dagu forts on 14 June after hard fighting in which Chinese gunners hit all allied vessels taking part in the action, disabling four warships. Otherwise the Chinese defeated every allied military initiative until the fall of the Chinese city at Tianjin on 14 July.

11. The Ashanti War, though a small affair, also took place in mid-1900 and occasioned pro and anti-imperialist rhetoric as well providing evidence for a discussion of most of the issues raised in this paper.

12. Lord Charles Beresford's visit to China brought to the fore newspaper debate on the relative merits of the "Open Door" policy or "slicing China like a melon." *The Times* correspondent in Beijing, George Morrison was in favor of the latter. See Lo Hui-Min, ed., *The Correspondence of G.E. Morrison*, vol. I (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976); letter from Morrison to Bland, 6 December 1897, 52; letter from Morrison to Bland, 17 January 1898, 61; letter from Morrison to Bland, 14 July 1899, 123. The Chinese were well aware of these debates and the impetus given them by Beresford's visit.

U.S. Cavalary unit at the Great Wall. Photo by Capt. Cornelius F. O'Keefe, 36th U.S. Volunteer Infantry, Engineer Office, China Relief Expedition. (National Archives Photo)

Boxer scholarship has a long pedigree.[13] But there has not been an analysis of English-language press coverage of the rebellion.[14] There has been no accurate discussion in the literature of the second phase of the rebellion which was potentially difficult for Westerners to report, namely the initial Chinese military success.[15] There may be a connection between the coverage of the first six weeks of the allied campaign by *The Times* and the fact that no scholarly English-language work on the Boxer Rebellion has recorded the military successes of Chinese forces during this time. While the establishment of such a connection does not lie within the confines of this study, it is one which relates to the issue of press responsibility and as such, must be raised in the context of the evidence to be presented concerning the coverage of the first six weeks of the allied campaign.

The Times

At the turn of the century, the policy of *The Times* concerning China was that Great Britain's interest should be commercial and not territorial.[16] Both before and after the Boxer Rebellion, *The Times* gave voice to an interest in China which stemmed from Britain's perception of her commercial interests and political relationships with Europe and Russia. Interest in and knowledge of China itself was of secondary importance. This bent dominated the thinking of its foreign editor, Valentine Chirol, who believed that in order to support

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13. At the time, the Boxer Rebellion provoked greater publicity and interest than did the events on Tienanmen Square of June 1989. Soon after the siege was relieved, a spate of memoirs was published by missionaries, diplomats, travelers, journalists, and military men. Early silent films showing the Battle of Dagu (August 1900) and the taking of the walls of Beijing by the U.S. Ninth Cavalry (January 1902) can be seen in the Library of Congress Film Archives. In China during the 1960s a massive oral history project was undertaken to interview survivors, men and women, who took part in the Boxer Rebellion. The film, "Fifty-five Days in Peking," made in 1962 starring Ava Gardner, Charlton Heston, and David Niven, is still shown perennially.

14. News items from *The Times* were selected for translation by the Continental press, thus to some extent influencing a section of European public opinion. The authority on the reporting of the Boxer Rebellion in the French press is Christine Corniot, "La Guerre des Boxeurs d'Après la Presse Française," *Etudes Chinoises* 6, (1987).

15. A bibliography of some of the more influential works on the Boxer uprising includes Paul H. Clements, *The Boxer Rebellion: A Political and Diplomatic Review* (New York: AMS Press Inc., 1967); Victor W. Purcell, *The Boxer Uprising*; George Nye Steiger, *China and the Occident: The Origins and Development of the Boxer Movement* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966); Tan, *The Boxer Catastrophe*; William J. Duiker, *Cultures in Collision: The Boxer Rebellion* (San Rafael, Cal.: Presidio Press, 1978); Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (Cambridge: University Press, 1963). None of these works describe Chinese military successes in June-July 1900 either at all or with an acceptable degree of accuracy.

16. *The History of* The Times, *Volume III, The Twentieth Century Test, 1884-1912* (London: *The Times*, 1947), 204.

Britain's commercial and imperial interests, Britain could go as far as to propose the division of the Chinese Empire.[17] In a letter to George Morrison dated 2 March 1899 Chirol wrote:

> It seems to me that the sooner we make up our minds that the game is played out at Peking (since we are not prepared to save it by supreme measures) the better. We can then fall back upon the alternative policy of *effective* spheres of influence and make the Yang Tsze (and Canton) our own: i.e., claim and maintain the same rights in those regions which we allow Russia and Germany to exercise in their spheres.[18]

In this view Chirol had the support of Morrison, senior correspondent for *The Times*. Morrison was a radical imperialist interested in China "as a theatre of competing imperialisms."[19] The personal charisma that surrounded Morrison during his lifetime caused observers to be sharply divided as to his professional competence[20] and commitment to China itself. He was talking to Japanese representatives as early as March 1900 about a British-Japanese alliance,[21] not a clear indication of Morrison's commitment to China in the climate following the Sino-Japanese War of 1895-96 which had heightened Chinese fear and enmity of Japan. His reporting on the events of early June 1900 showed him to be concerned with ensuring the humiliation of China and its government.[22] His account of the death of two missionaries stressed the horrific. He wrote that they "were hacked to pieces in circumstances of revolting barbarity" and linked these "murders" to Chinese government "complicity."[23] Journalists for the English language papers in North China wrote otherwise of missionary deaths, reporting that missionaries and other foreigners had been advised by their own consuls not to go to certain areas unless provided with Chinese guards, and that in specific instances when missionaries had not complied with this advice and had been captured by antagonized sections of the

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17. Ibid., 208. Chirol's interests in the Orient centred rather on India, Egypt, and Turkey than on China. See Chirol, *The Occident and The Orient, Lectures on the Harris Foundation 1924* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924). See Lo Hui-Min, ed., Letters from Chirol to Morrison of 20 October 1898,101, 16 January 1899, 111-12, and 2 March 1899, 112-13.
18. Lo Hui-Min, 113.
19. Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Hermit of Peking: The Hidden Life of Sir Edmund Backhouse* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 28.
20. Morrison's style and attitudes earned him frequent rebukes from Chirol, who also sent him suggestions regarding both the content and style of his dispatches which were of such an elementary nature as to cast some doubt on Morrison's professional ability as a journalist. See Lo Hui -Min, 76, 80-1, 89, 102, 105, 106-7.
21. *The History of the Times*, 354-55.
22. See his dispatches of 1 and 2 June 1900 for example.
23. *The Times*, 2 June 1900.

Chinese populace, other Chinese citizens had attempted to rescue them.[24] Morrison was aware of these factors. He received a letter from Dr. Robert Coltman, an American medical missionary in Beijing, regarding the death of the missionary Brooks: "You will be shocked to hear of poor Brooks's murder and mutilation. Sir C.[laude MacDonald, British Minister in Beijing] is taking it very coolly and intimating he should not have been traveling in the disturbed state of the country."[25] Chirol and Morrison's writing about China is reminiscent of the same elements Paul H. Weaver set out to criticize in the *New York World* in his book, *News and the Culture of Lying*.[26]

In chosing to analyze the second phase of the crisis, the reporting of the first six weeks after the opening of hostilities by the foreigners because in this time the Chinese were achieving ascendancy over the Europeans, we must set aside the debates on Morrison's ability, contribution, and influence. The months of June and July 1900 saw him besieged and incommunicado in Peking. The personality and professionalism of the other correspondent for *The Times*, J.O.P. Bland, stationed at Shanghai, then comes into question. Although Bland spoke Chinese, unlike Morrison, he had no sympathy for or interest in Chinese culture: "I never pass a village school house or hear these little Confucianists howling themselves into the classical condition of mental paralysis, without a feeling of gratitude for the system which has petrified the race's imagination."[27]

1900 was a year of conflict which raised questions about empire and race. China was still the Middle Kingdom, although minor concessions had been made — and refused[28] — to foreign powers. The question to be addressed is to what extent could the Western press acknowledge the reasons for and report on a Chinese insurrection and Chinese military success. To answer this question, the analysis of *The Times* sets out to determine whether accuracy of reporting was as great a priority for the editors and correspondents of this prominent newspaper as the writing of news so as to confirm already held perceptions of British commercial and political interests in China.

Examination of both *The Times* editorial column and the columns written by special correspondents reveals a highly-colored and emotive attitude toward the Chinese. There was a persistent use of adjectives such as "cruel," "ferocious," "revolting," "decayed," "reactionary," "murderous," "rigidly conservative," "malign," "ignorant," "reckless," "criminally apathetic,"

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24. *Peking and Tientsin Times*, editorial 7 April 1900. The *North China-Daily Herald*, 18 June 1900, reported that the Chinese sent wires to Tianjin to get help for railway engineers being pursued by Boxers, 1005.
25. Lo Hui-Min, 129.
26. Weaver, 35 and 40-1.
27. J.O.P. Bland, *Houseboat Days in China* (1909; reprint, London: William Heinemann, 1919). This little-known book gives a clear insight into Bland's racist feelings about the Chinese. See, for example, 62.
28. Following the German seizure of Chinese territory, the Italians also attempted to wrest territorial concessions from the Chinese government but were prevented by the Empress Dowager.

"corrupt," "treacherous," "arrogant," "sinister," "audacious," and "notorious."[29] Such language was not endemic in any of the other newspapers studied. Moreover, the contexts in which such adjectives were used were such as to imply a denial of the right of China as an independent sovereign nation to act in accordance with her own interests:

> That the Chinese troops who are supposed to be putting down the "rebellion" have been placed under the orders of the very general whose soldiery have been for months past a standing menace to the safety of foreigners in the province of Chi-li merely adds another touch of impudence to the sinister farce which is being played under the eyes of Western diplomacy in the Chinese capital.[30]

The word rebellion was placed in inverted commas to indicate *The Times'* view that the uprising was solely instigated by the Empress Dowager and could be put down at her command.[31] Moreover, no attempt was made to refer to the Chinese general in question by name, let alone to indicate his probable relationship to either of the two main factions at court, the reactionaries and the progressives. Indeed, the existence of such factions and their implications for developments in the Boxer crisis, was not a subject which came up for analysis or discussion in *The Times'* leading articles. Of the generals in command of the various wings of the Chinese army in the Beijing region, only one, General Dung Fuxiang, displayed open hostility to foreigners. His troops, as mentioned earlier, were also deeply feared by the Chinese population in and around Beijing.[32] The Commander-in-Chief of the Chinese army, General Yung Lu, was noted by contemporaries and by posterity for his professionalism and his consciousness of the need to observe the internationally-accepted codes of behavior with regard to the rights and safety of foreign nationals.

In addition to the emotive language used in *The Times'* leading stories to describe the Chinese in general, the Chinese army was described as "worthless

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29. This language is taken from leading articles published in *The Times* throughout June 1900.

30. *The Times*, 6 June 1900.

31. See *The Times* leading article 6 June 1900. At this date the character of the uprising was still fluid and no responsible analyst would have been able to comment on the precise relationship between the court and the insurgents. Indeed, the *Westminster Gazette* saw a connection between the Boxer Rebellion and Russia, the bête noire of British foreign affairs analysts (8 June).

32. The Hoover Institution of War Revolution and Peace, Stanford University, holds a tape-recording of the memories of Wai H. Tan (1891-1990) concerning the Boxer rising. He recalled the looting by Dong Fuxiang's soldiers. Tan's second uncle lost all his silver and was physically maltreated by these Muslim soldiers. Dong Fuxiang's soldiers were feared alike by the Han Chinese and Western European inhabitants of Beijing to such an extent that before the outbreak of hostilities, the Empress Dowager was obliged to order General Dong to move his troops to a camp-site outside the city.

. . . as fighting men," "mere mobs of men," "ill-armed rabble," "hordes," "swarms," and "ruffians." In terms of creating an image of China for the British public, it is suggested that such language, a direct descendant of similar language used in describing past conflicts with China,[33] initially inflated public opinion of British ability and influence. It did not reflect the nature of the Western-trained regular forces of the Chinese army nor that of some of the Boxer units which often fought with disciplined courage. Other newspapers published details of China's standing army as well as noting that the Boxers were a force to be reckoned with.[34] The language of *The Times* led to such a low estimation of the Chinese that, as the campaign wore on, the selection and elevation of rumors to facts by journalists writing for *The Times* was increasingly at variance with events as they were occurring and not helpful in explaining them. This analysis will show that the emotive language about China which formed part of the mental baggage of journalists working for *The Times* severely affected their outlook and work. It led them to produce reporting distinguished by conflicting stories, wishful thinking, omission of events, and even the discussion and analysis of events which never took place.

Such journalism was not common to all British newspapers. Despite its embarrassing "scoop" in prematurely reporting the deaths of all those besieged in the legations,[35] the *Daily Mail* produced responsible and accurate reporting of the Boxer crisis. The illustrated material in particular brought to the British public factual information about China and the Chinese, untainted by emotive or negative images. The *Daily Mail* was the only British paper studied to give a positive analysis of the policies of the Empress Dowager. It wrote of her "marvelous success" in keeping China for the Chinese and playing off foreign ministers against each other for the last forty years, and referred to the "brilliant manner" in which she had duped the foreign ministers over the last five years in the matter of foreign attempts to gain trading, mining, railway, and other concessions in China.[36] Before the hostilities had broken out,[37] the *Daily Mail* gave accurate details of the origins of the Boxer movement, did not

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33. See Private Henry Derry's account of his experiences in the first Opium War retold in *The Globe and Laurel* of November 1901 in Colonel Cyril Field, *Britain's Sea Soldiers: A History of the Royal Marines and Their Predecessors* vol. II, (Liverpool: Lyceum Press, 1924), 73.

34. The *Chicago Daily News*, 2 June 1900, said: "The question of dealing with this large and powerful army of insurrectionists is one that will tax the powers of the foreign ministers in China and may yet lead to serious complications among the powers themselves."

35. On 16 July the *Daily Mail* published a dispatch from a special correspondent in Shanghai describing the massacre of the besieged in the legations. In London a memorial service for the victims of the massacre was arranged in St. Paul's Cathedral for 23 July but canceled on the day as doubts had begun to arise about the *Daily Mail* dispatch. As a result of the mistake, many in the European community of Beijing, including George Morrison, had the interesting experience of reading their own obituaries once the siege was raised.

36. *Daily Mail*, 8 June 1900.

37. Ibid.

underestimate the Boxers and noted the ineffectual nature of foreign moves as the crisis deepened. By contrast, on 7 June, *The Times* voiced the opinion in a leading article that "The power of the 'Boxers'[38] is by no means formidable in itself."

The personality and policies of the Empress Dowager could not be said in any way to have been analyzed in the columns of *The Times* but were instead the continual objects of highly-emotive language.

> The impunity she has so far enjoyed . . . combined with her ignorance of the forces she is defying and with the malign influence of her *entourage* of eunuchs, parasites, and place-hunters . . . has induced her to offer a direct challenge to the foreign Powers whom she has learnt to regard as incapable of acting together.[39]

As the *Daily Mail* had pointed out, the ability to take advantage of the enmity between foreign powers in order to preserve her country, was one of the Empress Dowager's strengths.[40] This point was also made extensively in the American press on 8 June. The *New York World* published a leading article on the Empress Dowager under the headline, "The Legend of the Strong Woman Tszu Hszi," thus becoming the first newspaper to refer to her by her name. This was followed with a full-page article on Cixi on Saturday, 16 June, "The New Woman of China. The Empress herself. First Interview with Her Ever Published." The *Chicago Daily News* analyzed her reported moves based on known factors in the Chinese political situation,[41] and continued to do so as the crisis deepened. It reported: "The intentions of the Empress Dowager are still equivocal, with a balance of the testimony on the side of a determination to expel the appropriators of a part of her country or to lose her dynasty in the attempt."[42]

The American papers studied were all able to recognize Chinese military gains. The authority of *The Times*, however, meant that it was powerful in influencing contemporary policy makers.[43] For contemporaries and posterity, this authority dominated to such an extent that neither other organs of the British press nor any section of the American press was regarded as an equally acceptable source. For this reason it is important to note that the portrayal of facts and events in *The Times* was more persistently inaccurate than any other comparable newspaper. It also showed less understanding of any of the internal social and political pressures in China than did other newspapers.

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38. Of all fifteen newspapers selected as the database for this survey, *The Times* was the only newspaper to persist in using inverted commas around the word "Boxers."
39. *The Times*, 12 June 1900. Emphasis in the original.
40. "Using barbarians to control barbarians" was an age-old principle of Chinese statecraft.
41. *Chicago Daily News*, 12 June 1900.
42. *Chicago Daily News*, 15 June 1900.
43. Startt, *Journalists for Empire*, 7.

A U.S. Army supply train moves through a street near Peking. Photo by U.S. Army Signal Corps. (National Archives Photo)

Constant misreporting was not the case with *The Times* coverage of the Boer War. Boer tactics, strategy, motivation, and victories were acknowledged from the outset of the war by *The Times*. Similarly, Boer commanders were known as "the enemy." Even towards the end of the war, it was said of thethat they "did offer a very respectable resistance," and that they were capable of "delivering a somewhat mortifying check to our arms" and "daring attempts at raiding our communications."[44] When British forces lost battles, when large numbers of British soldiers were killed or captured, these events were not described in the passive tense. They were reported as actively occurring as a result of Boer military action. Throughout the campaign, concerned readers wrote letters to the editor urging that the Boers should be objects of emulation for the British Army as far as training or equipment were concerned.[45]

The Times never accorded similar active status to Chinese military responses to Western aggression. Letters to the editor about the China crisis reflected both the tone and the factual basis of *The Times'* leading articles and reporting of the campaign. One letter proposed the kidnapping of the Empress

44. *The Times*, 7 and 23 June 1900.

45. *The Times*, letter to the editor by H.S. Alexander, 1 January 1900, 4; letter to the editor signed "Ignotus," 1 January 1900, 7; letter to the editor signed "British Citizen," 1 January 1900, 13; letter to the editor by Miles, 11 June 1900.

Dowager as a solution to the Boxer crisis.[46] The point about *The Times'* view of the Chinese leadership, military, and people in relation to journalism covering the Boer war and even the Ashanti rebellion[47] was not simply that the Chinese were viewed less favorably. *The Times* showed a consistent inability to produce responsible reporting of China's political and military institutions and its history and culture. Above all, it failed to analyze events as they were being acted on by Chinese rulers and people, preferring to take the hypothetical posture that because the Chinese were incapable of acting for themselves, Britain should intervene and settle matters as *The Times* felt they should be settled: "We preferred to cling to our shibboleth about non-intervention in the internal affairs of foreign States — a shibboleth utterly inapplicable to the decayed politics of the East."[48] The Chinese had already been negatively characterized by Valentine Chirol, the foreign editor, and by correspondents working in China (not all of whom spoke Chinese). The Empress Dowager had invited the wives of the foreign ministers in Beijing to afternoon tea, an initiative which had earned her praise in the *Daily Mail* of 8 June 1900. Valentine Chirol wrote to George Morrison about this incident as follows:

> I feel very strongly about exposing the representatives of refined European womanhood to the ribald jests of Palace Eunuchs and the offensive curiosity of Chinese Mandarins, who will of course represent the ceremony as a great kowtow before the Empress and the Empress' party. However, the thing is done and there is no good kicking against accomplished facts.[49]

A reading of Sarah Conger's letters, the woman who engineered this meeting in her capacity as the wife of the American Minister in Beijing, gives a completely different view of this party and of the Empress herself. Mrs. Conger's view is of some consequence as she was herself "exposed to the ribald jest of Palace Eunuchs" on more than one occasion. Her writing shows that dignity, intelligence, and goodwill would bridge enormous gaps of social and racial difference.[50] Chirol's personal view of the Empress resurfaced in a leading article of 1900 in which he wrote that it was an error on the part of the British government not to have intervened on behalf of the reform movement in 1898.

> The reformers lost faith in our sincerity, and the reactionaries took heart to proceed boldly in the path on which they had entered. The attendance for the first time of the ladies of the *Corps Diplomatique* at a reception given by the EMPRESS

46. *The Times*, 9 June 1900.
47. *The Times*, leading article, 14 June 1900.
48. *The Times*, 5 June 1900.
49. Sterling Seagrave, *Dragon Lady: The Life and Legend of the Last Empress of China* (New York: Knopf, 1992), 260-1. Chirol to Morrison, 16 December 1898.
50. Sarah P. Conger, *Letters From China* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909).

> while her hands were still red with the blood of the principal reformers . . . was regarded by both sides as a graceful submission . . . to accomplished facts and those who know how to make them.[51]

Not only was *The Times* unable to report factual material about the elements involved in the Boxer crisis or to produce analysis of such facts as were reported by its correspondents, it also failed to ensure firsthand reporting of these events which were shaking the Western world. With the proliferation of wild and conflicting rumors, *The Times* was consistently the last newspaper of those examined to print definite and accurate news. Knowing that George Morrison was besieged and incommunicado, its Shanghai correspondent, J.O.P. Bland, made no move to approach Tianjin to be closer to the action. By contrast, in the late-nineteenth-century tradition of the dashing war correspondent,[52] the Irishman George Lynch of the *London Daily Chronicle* traveled 300 miles to reach the nearest telegraph point with the first report of the capture of Tianjin by the allied forces. He then returned to march to Beijing with the second relief expedition.[53] Similarly, the *New York World* dispatched Frederick Palmer to cover the Boxer Rebellion at first hand. On arrival at Tianjin, Palmer got a world scoop on the return of the British Admiral Seymour, who had failed to relieve the legations in Beijing and had been out of communication with his base for ten days. In a quandary as to whether to accept the reliability of the telegraph service or to take his dispatch personally to Shanghai and risk missing the advance to Beijing, Palmer traveled to Qingdao, sent a dispatch from there, went on to Shanghai, sent a duplicate dispatch, and returned to catch the relief expedition which had just left Tianjin.[54]

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Against this background of the opinions of Chirol, the language of the leading articles in *The Times* and the attitudes of its correspondents Morrison and Bland, a detailed examination of *The Times* reporting of Admiral Seymour's abortive expedition to relieve the besieged legations in Beijing shows *The Times* reporting conflicting and inaccurate stories day after day with little or no attempt at analyzing them. By contrast, in its reporting of the Boer War, *The Times* revealed itself to be capable of criticizing military leadership and organization, perceived tactical or strategic errors, and even barbaric treatment of Boer civilians by British soldiers.

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51. *The Times,* 5 June 1900.
52. A book exemplifying this tradition is F.L. Bullard, *Famous War Correspondents* (London: Pitman and Sons, 1914).
53. R.W. Desmond, *The Information Process: World News Reporting to the Twentieth Century* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1978), 417.
54. Frederick Palmer, *With My Own Eyes. A Personal Story of Battle Years* (London: Jarrolds, 1934), 166-70.

In late May, Boxer groups burned bridges and railway stations destroying nearly fifty miles of railway between Beijing and Tianjin.[55] (The distance between the two cities was approximately eighty miles). Very early on 10 June Admiral Seymour, commanding a mixed allied force, left Tianjin intending to travel by rail to Peking to rescue the legations. At the time he left, he was aware of the activities of Boxer units on and around the railway line. On 11 June, *The Times* published the first of many reports stating that Admiral Seymour was "believed to have reached Peking in safety." Admiral Seymour never got within thirty miles of Beijing. On 12 June, the Admiral reached Langfang, almost halfway between Tianjin and Beijing. In reports on 12 and 13 June, *The Times* expressed doubt as to whether the relieving force could reach Peking before 12 June. No indication was given that either Boxer groups or Chinese regular army soldiers were responsible for the "retardation" of Admiral Seymour's force. On 13 and 14 June, the foreign soldiers fought an engagement with the Boxers. On 14 June, the "Defeat of the Boxers" was reported in *The Times*. On 18 June, *The Times* published a report from Shanghai that the relief force was "close to Peking" and the Admiral's position was described as "serious." This report mentioned that the foreigners were confronted by Chinese troops and menaced by Boxers in the rear.

By 16 June, Admiral Seymour had, in fact, decided to retreat. In the long wait for definite news of Admiral Seymour (despite the much-vaunted European superiority in communications, the Chinese, in fact, controlled the only operable telegraph lines out of Beijing), the military correspondent for the *Westminster Gazette* did finally offer his opinion that "the Chinese may, like the Boers, display a power of resistance to our arms altogether unexpected."[56] In contrast to *The Times,* the *Westminster Gazette* produced reporting in which critical analysis was applied to the various dispatches reaching the paper.[57] On 27 June, the *Westminster Gazette* expressly acknowledged that the reports regarding Admiral Seymour's expedition were "exceptionally embarrassing in the nature of their information."

Admiral Seymour's dispatch printed in *The Times* on 30 June mentioned only eleven killed and forty-eight wounded. None of the reporting in *The Times* of Admiral Seymour's "anxiously" followed mission gave any indication of the dates or the nature of the engagements, which in fact caused him to lose sixty-three killed and 312 wounded out of his force of 2,044.

The eventual reporting of these figures in a leading article in *The Times*, on 29 June, three days after Admiral Seymour had been rescued and

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55. Seagrave, 314, inaccurately dates the first burning and destruction of railway lines and equipment as 5 June. This Boxer activity was, however, first reported in *The World* on 29 May. It was not reliably reported in *The Times* until 8 June. There was a report from Dalziel's Agency on 7 June; this agency was known for the wild inaccuracy of its reports in the world of journalism at the turn of the century.
56. *Westminster Gazette*, 25 June 1900.
57. *Westminster Gazette*, see especially 23 June 1900, 7; 25 June 1900, 7; and 26 June 1900, 7.

brought back to Tianjin, showed a marked contrast with the type of journalism practiced by men such as Lynch and Palmer.

> It is circumstantially stated by our Consul at Chifu that the expedition lost sixty-two men killed and 312 wounded, but rumour in these regions tends to be circumstantial, and much depends upon how the news reached Chifu, without becoming known to the Rear Admiral at Ta-ku.

These figures were never formally acknowledged or discussed in *The Times*. *The Times* was preoccupied with the unreliability of Chinese sources[58] which were quoted, however, if the news they conveyed was positive to British interests.[59] The appointment of a journalist whose concept of his profession was not such as to incline him to catch a boat to Tianjin and verify these and other matters, and the fact that Bland's services continued to be valued by *The Times*, opens to question the degree to which *The Times* produced responsible reporting on Chinese affairs.

It is not possible to discover from Admiral Seymour's dispatch, or any other material reported in *The Times*, what role was played by the Chinese in Seymour's decision to retreat, which Chinese forces were responsible, and at which stage of the sixteen days it took Admiral Seymour to fail to accomplish a journey of eighty miles and reach Beijing. Admiral Seymour's dispatch itself did not employ the word "retreat." The factors forcing him to "withdraw on Tientsin," according to the dispatch, were shortage of provisions, being hampered with wounded, and the cutting of communications with the base at Tianjin. There was no suggestion in the Admiral's dispatch of military or paramilitary action by the Chinese as a factor in his withdrawal. Admiral Seymour offered no explanation involving Chinese military action as to why he and his force spent five days holed up in an arsenal three miles out of Tianjin, nor why he had to ask for a relieving force to rescue them.

The details concerning Admiral Seymour's relief expedition as he officially reported it were available to readers of *The Times* on 30 June. In the

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58. The unreliability of Chinese sources was referred to in leading articles in *The Times* on 15 and 18 June and on two occasions on 29 June 1900. On 21 June 1900, it was stated that "It is impossible to place any reliance upon intelligence coming purely through native channels" and on 27 June 1900, it was reported that "An 'official's' statement that Tient-sin had been relieved on Saturday by an allied force of 8,000 men was made in Shanghai yesterday, and, as our Shanghai correspondent knows Chinese officials much too well to place the smallest reliance upon their words, it was doubtless made on European authority." Tianjin was not finally taken until 14 July 1900.

59. *The Times*, 19 June 1900, reported that two of the forts at Dagu had been blown up by the allies. "Though not officially confirmed, there is nothing improbable about this information." The forts were not blown up and *The Times* made no mention of the severe damage inflicted by Chinese gunners to four of the nine allied warships which took part in this action.

interim, the anxiety regarding the fate of the relief force temporarily eclipsed concern for those in the legations at Beijing or even those being bombarded by the Chinese regular army in Tianjin. On 19 June, *The Times* published a telegram from Chifu incorrectly reporting that the Admiral was back in Tianjin "having found advance impossible. The railway has been destroyed with remarkable thoroughness." The use of the passive voice should be noted here; readers of *The Times* could be forgiven for failing to discern any evidence of Chinese military initiative as a factor in Admiral Seymour's reported decision to return to Tianjin. Only five days earlier, *The Times* had reported the restoration of the broken line of communications which isolated Lord Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief of British forces in South Africa, in these terms:

> The nation cannot afford to tolerate incompetence or negligence such as must have been shown in this case; for the merest tiro knew that, when Lord Roberts depended for his supplies upon the single line of rails, running through hostile territory, a raid was only too probable and the greatest vigilance would be needed to thwart it.

Two days later, *The Times* expressly acknowledged the military ability of Boer commandos in disrupting communications:

> In spite of the number of British soldiers available under various generals to check them in all directions, the renewal of the raid on the railway and the cutting of the telegraph between Senekal and Winburg indicate how clever and mobile they still are.[60]

Boxers, being "rabble" and members of the various Chinese armies being "worthless as fighting men," did not actively figure in *The Times* reporting of Admiral Seymour's movements. The fact that the Chinese cut the rail in front and behind the Admiral as well as cutting him off from all communications could apparently be ignored in the editorial columns. If somehow railway lines were torn up, bridges and stations burned, water towers and rolling stock destroyed, and communications cut in such a passive way it became unclear who actively perpetrated these deeds. Readers of *The Times* were given no direct indication that these measures formed part of Chinese military tactics which had a precise objective: that of forcing Admiral Seymour back on Tianjin.

Thus the course taken by *The Times* in praising the "gallant" Admiral's conduct in the face of these difficulties becomes more understandable. He was not judged irresponsible in setting out with men untrained for land warfare and insufficient food and ammunition on a railway line known to have been attacked systematically by enemy forces, nor for being cut off by that enemy for fifteen

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60. *The Times*, 16 June 1900.

days so that the ships from which the marines of his force had been withdrawn were defenseless, and finally having to be rescued though only three miles from Tianjin. *The Times* never proposed any censorial discussion of Admiral Seymour's conduct. The military principle of securing one's lines of communication applied equally in identical situations in two different campaigns occurring at the same time. As *The Times* reported the events, the rules were not substantially modified by military action in South Africa — *The Times* called for someone to take responsibility for the military lapse that allowed the Boers to cut off Lord Roberts[61] — but they clearly were in China.

By 25 June, when the Admiral's retreat had brought him within three miles of Tianjin, *The Times* editorial column was still attempting an analysis of information to confirm the Admiral's arrival in the capital. Concerning this first expedition to relieve the legations, *The Times* editorial comment showed an unwavering tendency to credit rumors reflecting positively on allied military progress and a corresponding tendency to omit or dismiss information reporting military losses or defeats. Thus, in the absence of authentic information because of the disruption of communications, *The Times* fostered only those rumors reflecting positively on the mission. "Another telegram published today by the organ of Shêng, Director of Railways, states that the British flag was flying yesterday over the south gate of Peking. This is presumed to indicate the arrival of Admiral Seymour's force."[62]

By contrast, a 5 June editorial comment on Lord Roberts' silence observed: "In our ignorance of the Boer forces between [Johannesburg] and Pretoria as well as the amount of determination they may be throwing into their defence, it is impossible to judge of his rate of progress." Similar ignorance with regard to Admiral Seymour's whereabouts neither gave rise to an assessment of Chinese military initiatives as a factor in his having "vanished" nor to any criticism of the Admiral's lack of foresight and ability as a commander of a land force. When *The Times* was presented with evidence indicating the possibility of Chinese military successes, this was written off as some sort of "design," a strategy of disinformation deliberately used by the Chinese. There was no attempt to engage with the possibility that Admiral Seymour may have been defeated.

> The authorities at Peking are only too likely to represent the interruption of the Admiral's advance to their own menacing attitude, if not to his actual defeat by the forces at their disposal or acting under their inspiration. There are indications

61. *The Times*, 14 June 1900, said: "At present we are absolutely in the dark as to the officers who are to blame. But we are quite as unable to believe that nobody was at fault as we are to admit that such mistakes should be overlooked. In the Navy there is always somebody who can be held responsible for a disaster . . . Is the Army supposed to be exempt from this salutary rule?"

62: *The Times*, 20 June 1900, from its correspondent, in Shanghai.

Soldiers from an Indian unit pose in full uniform in Peking. Photo by Capt. Cornelius F. O'Keefe, 36th U.S. Volunteer Infantry, Engineer Office, China Relief Expedition. (National Archives Photo)

> of such a design in some of the telegrams which reach us from Tientsin.[63]

Contrast this with the American press: *Chicago Daily News,* 14 June, "Relief Party is Surrounded. Dispatches Received in Washington that Troops Are in

63. *The Times*, 16 June 1900.

Danger," *New York World,* 15 June, "Chinese Oppose the Relief Column. Serious Engagement with Their Troops on the Way to Peking. Relief Party Delayed . . ." or with other sections of the British press. Although the editorial in the *Daily Mail* on 15 June spoke of Admiral Seymour having "to deal with an enemy of the lowest fighting power" and there being every reason to suppose that he would be able "to drive back the Boxers, and if need be, even to tackle the Chinese braves, and to seize the Empress," it also quoted on that day a dispatch from Reuters dated 13 June: "It is considered that the present force [Admiral Seymour's] will be absurdly inadequate should the Imperial troops join the Boxers." On 18 June, the *Daily Mail* reported, "Rioters, however, have torn up the line both in front and behind the force, so its position is dangerous." On 19 June the editorial in the *Daily Mail* noted that "Admiral Seymour . . . has been compelled to beat a retreat to Tientsin."

The persistence of *The Times* in wishing to give credence only to those stories that could be interpreted to demonstrate the success of the relief force was reflected in a report on 27 June that Admiral Seymour had the ministers of the foreign legations with him. That is, that he had accomplished his mission. There was never any clear statement to the effect that Admiral Seymour had failed to reach Beijing. If it could not be clearly acknowledged that Admiral Seymour had failed, then it could not be suggested that this was anything to do with the Chinese. Lack of food and ammunition were the acknowledged factors: "Even the bravest and the most willing of troops cannot march through a hostile country without supplies and without sufficient water." But how was it that the "rabble," the "worthless . . . fighting men" managed to kill sixty-two and wound 312 in a force of 2,044? This was not a question that either *The Times* nor the Admiral felt accountable to answer:

> In fairly favourable conditions a force of 2,000 Europeans might be relied upon to pull through a great deal of Chinese opposition, but in this case the physical conditions are so far from favourable as to provoke and justify the gravest apprehensions.[64]

A clearer example of writing the enemy out of a series of victorious engagements cannot be seen in any of the other newspaper accounts of the first six weeks of the Boxer campaign. In terms of image-making, the denial of military superiority to the Chinese served many purposes. It fulfilled the expectations of Chinese inferiority held by the journalists writing for *The Times,* and therefore contributed to the negative image of the Chinese held by the influential sectors of the British public. It not only exonerated Admiral Seymour's military ineptitude, but also contributed to the nature of the whitewashing of the "gallant" and "able" Admiral. In reporting this phase of the Boxer crisis, *The Times* did not distinguish itself by its accurate reporting, its

64. *The Times*, 26 June 1900.

responsible analysis, or by bringing authentic information about China and the Chinese to its readers.

The *World*

At the opposite end of the spectrum of journalism from *The Times* were the mass-circulation, sensationalist newspapers such as the *Daily Mail*. To compare the American reporting of this early part of the Boxer Campaign, the *New York World* was selected to represent the other extreme from *The Times* on another continent. Sensationalist the *World* certainly was. Headlines such as "Professor Found Woman Under Bed," a front-page headline on 25 May 1900, would not incline the reader to expect a significant degree of responsible or analytical reporting from the *World*. However, like the *Daily Mail*, the *World's* reporting of the China crisis was more responsible than that of *The Times* in many ways. The only point of similarity was the acceptance of rumors from British or Chinese sources saying that Admiral Seymour had reached Beijing (21 June) which — as was not the case with *The Times* — was superseded by a major front page headline on 24 June, "Peking Unrelieved," and the story that Admiral Seymour had saved the foreign ministers (28 June). This story was in turn superseded on 30 June by a report giving the "first authentic news of Seymour's return without the foreign envoys" under the heading: "Seymour Reports His Failure." In a highly volatile situation in which reporters were plagued by almost insurmountable difficulties in getting accurate stories, the *World*, like most other papers, did publish inaccurate rumor. More exceptionally, however, it published stories retracting the earlier inaccurate headlines.

At this time the *World* was strongly anti-imperialist, which led to a very clear line on American involvement and behavior in Cuba and the Philippines and criticism of British foreign policy.[65] In domestic affairs, the *World* took a hard line on corruption among politicians and extended this to a criticism of the political patronage in overseas appointments which it saw as leading to profiteering.[66] The paper also showed a readiness to expose sharply what it alleged to be deficiencies in military leaders, an article on General Otis, commanding officer in the Philippines on 12 June containing a savage indictment of the man's personal and professional record.[67] Headlines on 4 June made the *World's* position on American involvement in the Philippines amply clear: "Taft tells Filipinos to Yield and be Happy. . . . All sorts of Nice Presents from the Benevolent McKinley for Brown men who lay Down Arms."[68] More broadly, the *World* had a larger view of "civilization" than that espoused by the *Times*, being less ready to use the term but when it was used,

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65. *World*, 12 and 20 June 1900.
66. *World*, 28 May 1900, 12 June 1900.
67. *World*, 7 June 1900.
68. This headline was singled out for further comment in an editorial snippet on 5 June, " 'Be good and you will be happy,' says . . . Taft to the Filipinos. But they seem to regard freedom as the first essential to happiness."

making it clear that whatever qualities were embodied in the word "civilisation," it could not be applied one for one to white western men's behavior; even white western man had a tenuous grasp on civilization.[69] Thus, though the *World* undoubtedly devoted large proportions of its columns to scandal, there were elements of editorial policy favorable to a broader range of reporting style on China.

In addition to the *World's* anti-imperialist line, there was frequent reporting of Chinese individuals and institutions as valid entities operating according to Chinese policy dictates. While screaming headlines shouted "Save us or Avenge us!",[70] the actual reporting of missionary involvement and its consequences in the *World* was more detailed and offered many more points of view than that of *The Times*.[71] The Chinese ambassador to America, Wu TingFang, was interviewed frequently by the *World* outside the period of the Boxer crisis. On 17 May 1900, under the heading "Wu Ting Fang Sarcastic," the *World* reported that he criticized the attitude of Anglo-Saxons toward women doctors and quoted his concluding advice that they should go to China to practise. Thus we see an interesting paradox in this American newspaper's reporting on China. Undeniably a paper committed to exposing political and social scandal, it was this impetus that led the paper to reveal American wrongs in domestic and international contexts. It was thus able to acknowledge the rights and interests of indigenous peoples and even women. The paradox arises because the mass circulation public which the paper aimed to capture, was subjected to a range of serious articles on China which postulated China as a political entity, the institutions of which needed to be understood.[72]

The people who bought and read the 18,848,329[73] copies of the *World* sold in June 1900 were exposed to articles giving a detailed — and substantially accurate — overview of the historical origins of the Boxers;[74] they read of internal Chinese politics under such headings as "Chinese Cabinet Crisis;"[75] they were given factual background on Chinese military strength and explanations of the origins, growth, and power of the Chinese Ministry for

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69. *The World*, 9 and 16 June 1900. (See Editorial, "Where Are Missouri's Men?")
70. See Frederick Lewis Allen, "Newspapers and the Truth," first published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in January 1892 in Tom Goldstein, ed., *Killing the Messenger: 100 Years of Media Criticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 238, for an explanation of the particular characteristics necessary for newspaper headline composition and, by implication, the potential for these to lead to headlines which often bear little relation to the tone of the report beneath.
71. In the month of June, *The Times'* only coverage of the issues arising from missionary presence in China was a speech made by Lord Salisbury to the London Missionary Society (20 June) and the correspondence arising from this (25 June) and two short reports by Reuters on 7 and 11 June quoting missionaries who had returned to London.
72. This study thus explains and amplifies the paradoxical nature of the *World* referred to in the *Encyclopaedia of American Journalism*, 351.
73. The paper claimed that it had the largest net paid circulation in America.
74. *World*, 31 May 1900.
75. *World*, 8 June 1900.

Foreign Affairs;[76] they read a world scoop portrayal of the Empress Dowager, sympathetic, informative, and entirely lacking in pejorative or scurrilous language.[77] Finally, the U.S. public was made aware that the nature of the Boxer troubles meant that losses and deaths at their hands were also suffered by Chinese people of all classes, Christian, non-Christian, magistrate, or coolie.[78]

Another important difference between papers like the *World* and a paper like *The Times* was the value placed by the former on being first with a story, on getting a scoop. Events in China were deemed sufficiently newsworthy to send the *World's* staff war correspondent to China. Frederick Palmer arrived at Shanghai on 24 June and his dispatch made front page headline news on 27 June as "the first cable message received by any paper direct from the seat of war." Palmer's next dispatch written on board the U.S. flagship *Newark* brought the first authentic news of the arrival at Tianjin of Admiral Seymour's forces. Palmer's reports contained details about Chinese military preparations, equipment and dispositions which never appeared in *The Times*.

In addition to sending Palmer to Tianjin, the *World* reported interviews with a wide range of people, including the Chinese Ambassador in Washington, Bishop J.W. Joyce of the Methodist Church, General Schofield, Justice Brewer, Bishop Cranston, and Charles Denby, former U.S. Minister to China.[79] These interviews spoke with moderation and dignity of a China nowhere accessible to readers of *The Times,* which only published one such interview during this phase of the crisis — an interview with the German Catholic Bishop Anzer on 9 June 1900. Most of those interviewed by the *World* had considerable experience of China. The consensus of opinion was that China would not be dismembered.

In his book, *News and the Culture of Lying*, Paul H. Weaver offers an extensive negative critique of the style of journalism Pulitzer brought into being. Most particularly, Weaver wrote that

> From day one Pulitzer's policy was to stop writing stories about events in their institutional contexts and to start writing stories that would directly engage the values and the feelings of the people among whom Pulitzer was seeking his audience.[80]
>
> It was just the kind of communication the Founding Fathers had warned about . . . History showed that in the absence of institutions that shape, inform, test, check, qualify, and validate popular views, public opinion degenerated into fleeting passions engendered by passing events and manipulated by unscrupulous demagogues . . . Everything the Constitution had done to make democracy safe for individual right and prudent statecraft, Pulitzer's journalism was undoing. It took events out of their constitutional contexts . . . It

76. *World*, 11 June1900.
77. *World*, 17 June 1900.
78. *World*, 20 June 1900.
79. See the *World*, 3, 17, 24, and 30 June 1900.
80. Weaver, 35.

> stressed the emotional and the immediate rather than the rational and the considered.[81]

Coverage of the Boxer crisis by the *World* does not bear out any of the above assertions. Whether or not Wu Tingfang received more space in the columns of the *World* because he was the ambassador of an exotic country, the fact is that he received such space and his opinions reached a mass audience, many of whom would have had more firsthand experience of racism against the Chinese than a similar audience in Britain.[82] A newspaper which had given the amount of accurate background detail on China described above at the time of a crisis which had the potential to bring out optimum hysteria and colored reporting, could not be said at this time in respect of this crisis to be manipulating public opinion so that it "degenerated into fleeting passions engendered by passing events" as Weaver claims in the above citation with respect to the style of journalism initiated by Pulitzer. Moreover, the journalistic innovation of the interview, a reporting style not yet adopted by *The Times,* has been shown to have been used most responsibly by the *World* both in the range of people interviewed and in the selection of their views on China which finally appeared in print.

The American public reading the yellow press had more reason to fear China and the Chinese and more experience of Chinese people in confrontational situations on American soil, than was the case in Britain. Yet the month of June saw the *World* providing a stream of factual and pictorial information from a wide variety of sources. It did not show the paper "stressing the emotional and immediate rather than the rational and the considered."

With factual information about the nature of the Boxer adherents, this kind of reporting in combination with other details about Chinese political and military leaders, built up an image more corresponding to what was happening in China to Westerners as well as to Chinese people. Thus by 20 June, readers of the *World* following the Chinese crisis learned that the palace of the Viceroy of Tianjin had been burned, the magistrate of Wingshun had been killed, and many towns had been overrun by the Boxers. Thus, unlike the readers of *The Times* who were never given this kind of information, the readers of the *World* were offered the view that the death of Chinese people and the destruction of their property also rated as "newsworthy." The *World* had built up an accurate image of the Boxers as a rebellious element no longer controllable by Chinese or Western authorities by a series of background articles, special interviews, and headlines reporting Chinese military successes as they occurred.

An editorial on 2 July showed the *World* to be the only newspaper of those selected for this study which voiced a causal relationship between the currently articulated Western notion of the dismemberment of the Chinese Empire and the "wishes or rights of the Chinese," even with the form of protest

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81. Ibid., 41.

82. See R. McLellan, *The Heathen Chinee: A Study of American Attitudes Towards China 1890-1906* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971) and Stewart C. Miller, *The Unwelcome Immigrant: The American Image of the Chinese 1785-1882* (California: University of California Press, 1969).

expressed by the Boxer uprising. The question of why the views of men like Chirol, Morrison, and Bland drowned the voices brought into print by the *World*, must be asked. On the basis of this analysis, an answer pointing to the *World's* use of an inferior or irresponsible journalism which caused public opinion to "degenerate into fleeing passions engendered by passing events" would not be appropriate. Still, there were elements of yellow journalism in the coverage of the Boxer crisis by the *World;* China was inaccessible, feared and exotic. Publishing measured analytical interviews by people who had been there, publishing pictures of places in China, publishing details about the nature of Chinese political and industrial institutions, giving the ruler of China a name and an identity qua ruler of China, publishing accurate full-page background stories on the anniversary of past conflict in China,[83] and above all sending a journalist of the caliber of Palmer to report events at first hand — all these were techniques of a journalism which, at least in respect of China, could have met the standards of the most exacting of the Founding Fathers.

By contrast, the pages of *The Times* were filled with emotive comments by a foreign editor who was less interested and knowledgeable about China than he was in Egypt, India, Turkey, and the Sudan. No attempt was made to publish a wide range of the views of people interested in or knowledgeable about Chinese history and culture. Of the two foreign correspondents in China, Morrison, who was besieged in Beijing, could not speak or read Chinese; fifteen years in China as correspondent for *The Times* did not incline him to learn the language. The other correspondent, Bland, who did speak Chinese, was stationed at Shanghai. Communications between Shanghai and the outside world were undisturbed. Neither he nor the management of *The Times* thought it worthwhile for him to make the three-day risk-free boat trip to reach Tianjin, the seat of the desperate battles between the Chinese and the allied invaders. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that its reputation as the paper serving the ruling class of a nation at the zenith of its imperial power overrode consideration of the actual style and content of the reporting of the China crisis in *The Times.*

In the language of the editorial columns and the headlines in the *World*, we see an image of China and the opening weeks of the Boxer campaign which is almost entirely irreconcilable with that portrayed by *The Times.* Nowhere did the Boxers "swarm" or "teem"; neither did they appear in "hordes" or "mobs." In the period under discussion they were described variously as "enemies," "insurgent," "a large force," "patriotic Chinamen," and "fanatical and ferocious" (in the context "fanatical" was descriptive of the single-mindedness of their intent rather than pejorative). Reference was made to the "fury of the Boxers."[84] In his study, *The Heathen Chinee,* McClellan claims that there was frequent use of the word "barbarian" to describe the Chinese at this time;[85] however, the word "barbarism" was used in connection with the Chinese only once in the month of

83. *World*, 24 June 1900.
84. This language is taken from the editorial columns of the *World* throughout June 1900.
85. McClellan, 85.

June in the editorial columns of the *World*. This is notable in the context generated by the international hysteria surrounding siege of the legations. By contrast, it was used frequently in the leading articles of *The Times*, each time with additional coloring, for example, "revolting barbarity," "avalanche of Asiatic barbarism," "unyielding barbarism," "outburst of Oriental barbarism."[86] The *World's* strongest language was employed on one occasion in condemnation of Chinese official action in connection with the perceived failure to protect the foreign envoys. This was characterized on 19 June as a "confession of outlawry and a substitution of barbarism for the peaceful intercourse of civilization." To counterbalance this view, the leading article of 1 July pointed out that "Chinese diplomatic usages differ widely from those of Western nations."

There were many factors leading to the absence of emotive pejorative language in describing the Chinese in the editorial columns of the *World* in June 1900. Among these were a general American sympathy for the underdog,[87] American antipathy to the aggressive aspects of British imperialism, and Pulitzer's own philosophy of journalism. Pulitzer had an expressed interest in advancing the welfare of mankind and held the idealistic view "that the U.S. had a special mission in world affairs to shun the imperialistic power politics of the Old World and promote democracy among our sister states in the New."[88] More specifically, Pulitzer did not approve of the attitude in the popular press of the 1890's that news from exotic countries was a form of entertainment and a good source of fantasy and horror stories.[89] Both the leading articles on the editorial page and the feature review articles on China in June 1900 show the *World* to have reflected these concerns.

Another concern expressed in the editorial columns of the *World* was with the "facts." Judgment was withheld because of "ignorance of the actual facts" or qualified "on this statement of the facts."[90] A leading article on 14 June, headed "The Reporter and the 'View Point,' " argued whether in domestic politics or foreign wars,

> The duty of the correspondent is to observe and describe all that actually takes place within his range of observation, without exaggeration, distortion, omission or any form or expression of prejudice . . . all news reports should be photographic and phonographic, and hence free from "color" or prejudice.

The process of journalism as conceived of by those working for the *World* was one which sought to describe the facts, to publish immediately news

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86. *The Times*, 9, 18, 21, and 25 June 1900.
87. Sidney Kobre, *Development of American Journalism* (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown, 1969), 493.
88. Joyce Milton, *The Yellow Kids: Foreign Correspondents in the Heyday of Yellow Journalism* (New York: Harper & Rowe, 1989), 26.
89. Milton, 92-93.
90. *World*, 28 June, 1 July.

which invalidated or superseded those facts and to offer analysis based on other facts already proven. Despite the general assumption that sensational newspapers were cavalier with facts, the headlines in the *World* throughout June gave a more accurate view of events in China than did those in *The Times.*[91] On 23 June 1900, the *World* published a report from the U.S. gunboat *Nashville* saying that Tianjin was being bombarded and giving the names of all the Chinese generals involved. The report noted that "the foreign residents are confined to a restricted district and as food and water are scarce they have suffered greatly." This did indeed constitute a precise statement of the facts. Moreover, this report added a detail not noted in any other newspapers examined in this study. "The Tongshan mines at Peitaiho were abandoned by soldiers, and rioters flooded the mines and ruined the machinery." Thus reported, this incident became part of Western experience of an event as it might have been described had it occurred in Britain or America. The use of the word "rioters," the fact that the mines had been guarded by soldiers, and the reporting of the destruction of the machinery as a possibility that the government had foreseen and attempted to prevent gave the incident the same sort of color as if it had occurred in Wales or Pennsylvania.

Some headlines conveyed inaccurate news during this month, but they were corrected. There were also emotive headlines, but these were rare and without exception headed factual nonemotive reporting. The one headline in this period which, succumbing to the temptations of alliteration, abandoned the usual style of the *World* and employed the language of *The Times* was "Mongol Mobs Swarm About Legations Eager to Murder."[92]

A final point about the journalism of the *World.* Like the *Daily Mail,* the *Westminster Gazette,* and the *Chicago Daily News,* the *World* offered express analysis of the news itself and judgment on its accuracy according to the source of the news and other information known to be true. *The Times* while systematically denigrating Chinese sources, showed a consistent tendency to accept such sources if they contributed to a picture showing a favorable outcome for British or allied interests. Thus, there was contradictory reporting on the Chinese crisis in the pages of *The Times* which was never discussed or resolved.

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91. 28 May, "Foreigners in Peril in the Capital of China"; 29 May, "Army of Boxers Marching on Peking/Railway Station and Cars Burned and Tracks Destroyed/ Foreigners in Flight"; 30 May, "Our China Legation Threatened by Boxers/Summons 100 Marines from Cruiser Newark"; 31 May, "China Holds Back the Foreign Troops"; 4 June, "Boxers Prepare to Attack Tientsin"; 6 June, "More Americans to Fight the Boxers"; 7 June, "Battle with Boxers Near Peking, Foreign Families Flee for Safety"; 9 June, "Tientsin Surrounded/Foreigners in Terror";10 June, "Boxers Burn Town & Kill Christians"; 15 June, "Chinese Oppose the Relief Column"; 17 June, "Legations in Peking Wrecked/China Cut Off From the World"; 18 June, "We Send a Regiment From Manila to China"; 19 June, "Chinese Forts Taken by the Allied Fleets/Tientsin Natives Shell the Foreign Quarters"; 23 June, "Tientsin in Ruins; Anarchy in Peking"; 25 June, "Admiral Remey Ordered to China and a Full Brigade of US Troops"; 3 July, "No Relief Force on the Way to Peking."
92. *World*, 16 June 1900.

The absence of any attempt to reconcile contradictory reports on a story of worldwide interest in the leading British newspaper of the time is a notable feature of *The Times'* reporting of the Boxer rising. In *Victorian News and Newspapers,* Lucy Brown commented that

> A modern reader is struck, not so much by the biased character of the reports, some of which might be encountered today, as by the fact that they were offered in a bald, unreconciled form with no attempt to analyse or explain things to the general reader.[93]

The *World* made such attempts in a way which distinguished its reporting as unique at this time. By using such a formula as, "The report [that x is happening] is taken to mean [y]," the reader got not only the *World's* interpretation but also was offered the possibility of realising that an interpretation had been made. On 16 June readers of the *World* read: "The report that the mixed forces will seize the Taku forts is taken to mean that the foreign commanders expect no aid from the Chinese Government in repressing the disorders and are determined to make Taku secure as a base from which to operate." Some examples of the *World's* analysis are based on data perhaps not available to and certainly not reported in or taken up by *The Times.*

On 22 June a comparison was made between the bombardment of Tianjin and probable events taking place in Beijing. Because the *World* had already published details of the guns being used, their range, and the numbers and types of Chinese forces involved, this attempt at interpretation was reasonably accurate. Attention to sources and comparatively little hysteria in reporting, meant that the *World* squashed wild rumors throughout June. Like the whole of the Western press, it succumbed in July to the story that all Westerners in Beijing had been killed. On 22 June, for example, the *World* reported:

> A story was afloat here today that President McKinley had received a dispatch reporting a massacre of foreigners in Beijing, Minister Conger and many other Americans being among the slain. The rumor must have been our exaggerated version of Admiral Kempff's despatch, for the *World* has ascertained with absolute certainty that the President received no other news about China today than what was contained in the Admiral's report.

The clearest example of responsible journalism in collecting reliable data and using this to analyze stories and offering a critical interpretation of news stories, concerned the report of the massacre of foreigners at Tianjin:

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93. Lucy Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 233.

> A recent census of Tientsin shows the foreign population to be about 1,000 persons . . . Thus the report from Japanese sources that 1,500 foreigners at Tientsin had been massacred would seem to be grossly exaggerated. Every foreigner in Tientsin would have to be killed to bring the total up to anywhere near that number.[94]

The *World* offered its readers outstanding coverage of the China crisis in terms of the quality of featurewriting, reporting, editing, and evaluation of news. On the same day, 23 June, in a leading article, "The News from China," the *World* showed the ability to offer a concise and responsible evaluation of news from a variety of sources.

Conclusions

In their celebrated essay, "A Test of the News," Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz surveyed the reporting of the Bolshevik revolution by the *New York Times.*[95] They documented and condemned the erroneous reporting of this event on grounds which included the facts that "the *New York Times* index is an enormous convenience to any student of contemporary history" and "because the bound volumes are easily accessible."[96] This is also the case for *The Times.* They made a similar point about the national and international reputation of the paper. There was, and is still today, a belief that great newspapers reported the truth. Furthermore, as Lippmann and Merz also showed with the *New York Times,* these papers had enormous influence on contemporary decision makers.[97] Moreover, because of their widely-accepted position as reliable and accessible authority, their version of events was also claimed by posterity to be the correct one. Lippmann and Merz believed that newspaper reporters "were performing the supreme duty in democracy: supplying the information on which public opinion feeds." They concluded roundly that "they were derelict in that duty."[98] The parallels between their analysis of the *New York Times* coverage of the Bolshevik revolution and this briefer analysis of the *Times'* reporting of the Boxer rising are striking.

This study raises a number of questions regarding the responsibility of the press to inform its readers; only two will be touched on in conclusion. First, in 1900 there was a perception of a hierarchy of enemies as worthy opponents or fighting men with the Chinese being at the bottom in the British

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94. *World*, 23 June 1900.
95. See Walter Lippmann and Charles Mertz's influential essay, "A Test of the News," first published in *The New Republic* on 4 August 1920, in Goldstein, *Killing the Messenger: 100 Years of Media Criticism*
96. Goldstein, 89.
97. See Lucy Brown, 262-3, for an example of politicians taking their information from the daily press. She comments on the quality of the reporting which meant that these readers "could well be excused their failure to appreciate the situation."
98. Ibid., 91.

view. The second point refers to the press as provider of accurate, uncolored news coverage and analysis as the differences between the stately and the sensationalist press have been surveyed above.

On the question of perception of the enemy, it is too simplistic to say that such perception followed clear-cut lines of race and religion. Quite clearly this study has shown that a preconceived picture of the Chinese presented in emotive language influenced the ability of *The Times* to report actual Chinese military successes. Reporting in the *World* gave accurate details about the origins of the Boxers and the strength and disposition of the Chinese Imperial Army, thus leading to headlines describing the crisis as it actually evolved in the six weeks under consideration. To explain this difference, it is necessary to look beyond racial and religious prejudice in studying the reporting of war from the last quarter of the nineteenth century up to the 1914-1918 war.

Established theaters of war such as the Balkans, the Sudan, and the far north of India were familiar territory to most experienced war correspondents. There was nothing familiar about China. War correspondents, their editors, and the newspaper reading public had been accustomed to formulating acceptable images of war. Nothing that was happening in China fitted the bill as far as *The Times* was concerned. Moreover, unlike many other British and American newspapers who sent correspondents to China, *The Times* had no man covering the events at first hand. The Chinese were proving decidedly worthy as fighting men. After the Chinese Imperial Army beat back the Russian Cossacks three times during the battle for Tianjin, the Russians refused to hold the railway station any longer. At that time the Cossacks were universally held to be among the most redoubtable fighting men in the world. Chinese military successes were reported in the American press.[99] A partial explanation for the readiness of the American press to acknowledge Chinese military successes may lie in the different view of national interests *viz à viz* China. However, some credit must go to individual journalists and editors whose concept of journalism included the necessity of first-hand reporting. In addition to Palmer, another notable American journalist to cover the Boxer crisis was Wilbur Chamberlin of the *New York Sun.*[100] Chamberlin's life was cut short tragically by illness and death on his return from China, thus depriving newspaper reporting of one of that rare group of journalists whose attitude showed him to be of no country in the pursuit of his profession.

What was being purveyed to some extent was not war, but an image of war. The public being an assenting partner, a study such as this one focusing on either extreme of the press and its public in two countries, allows some

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99. *Chicago Daily News*, 23 June 1900, "Battle on in China. U.S. Marines and Other Forces Engage Chinese Troops at Tientsin. Great Loss of Life Reported. Native Soldiers Said to Have Killed Many Foreigners." Chinese troops did not, in fact, kill many foreign civilians but they did almost wipe out an entire American detachment under Colonel Liscum during the final battle for Tianjin.

100. Chamberlin's book, *Ordered to China* (London: Methuen, 1904), published posthumously, is a monument to the energy and humanity of a turn-of-the-century reporter.

assertions to be made about the power of the press in making and informing images. This study showed that the conventional understanding of responsible, accurate dispassionate reporting being the province of the stately press, and wild, emotional, and highly-colored reporting the characteristic of the sensationalist press is untenable as far as the reporting of the first six weeks of the Boxer campaign is concerned. *The Times* systematically used emotive language to denigrate the ruler of China and Chinese political and military institutions, Chinese leaders and the Chinese people. It omitted any reference to Chinese military success, selected news from rumor on the basis of whether such rumor could give an impression of British success and above all, failed to supply its readers with any accurate background information or firsthand reporting of the Boxer crisis. By contrast, there was nothing sensationalist or emotive about the reporting in either the British *Daily Mail* or the *New York World.* Insofar as the reporting of the China crisis was concerned, the readers of mass circulation newspapers in America and Britain had a wider range of more reliable material on which to base their opinions, than did the readers of *The Times.*

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'The Courage to Call Things by Their Right Names': Fanny Fern, Feminine Sympathy, and Feminist Issues in Nineteenth-Century American Journalism

By Carolyn L. Kitch

For more than a century, scholars have placed journalist and novelist Fanny Fern among "sentimental" women writers of the mid-nineteenth century. This article — drawing on evidence in her weekly New York Ledger *columns — contends that she deserves recognition as a pioneering feminist and an early reform journalist.*

At the close of the twentieth century, the name Fanny Fern — the pseudonym of Sara Willis Parton — is best remembered among literary historians familiar with her popular 1854 novel, *Ruth Hall.* Few media historians have paid serious attention to the considerable body of work Fern produced in twenty-one years of newspaper journalism. Even fewer place her among the pioneers of reform journalism, or suspect that a writer with such a pen name could have been a crusader for women's rights.

But in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, Fanny Fern was a national celebrity whose views were widely known. From 1851 to 1872, her weekly newspaper columns held the attention of a wide audience fascinated by her outspokenness, particularly her denunciations of what she felt was wrong with her society — from prison conditions to women's restrictive clothing to sanctimonious ministers.

In her choice of a forum for her opinions, Fern was hardly a rebel. As media historian Catherine Mitchell has noted, in a society characterized by a division between men's and women's spheres of social and political activity,

"writing for publication lay within woman's sphere."[1] Furthermore, Fern's viewpoints were expressed in a personal style that placed her within the feminine rhetoric of her day. Ann Douglas describes the antebellum period in which Fern began her career as a time when American culture, especially writing, was "feminized" by sentiment and sympathy. While Fern's journalistic writing was only sometimes sentimental (more often it took a tone of humor or outrage), it was almost always sympathetic. Fern was part of "what Harriet Beecher Stowe astutely called 'Pink and White Tyranny': the drive of nineteenth-century American women to gain power through the exploitation of their feminine identity as their society defined it."[2]

Moral suasion was a common tool of this drive, and Fern used it. Her positions on topics such as domineering husbands, the low pay of working women, and the sexual double standard for men and women echoed the rhetoric of the various women's moral-reform movements of the day. She agreed, for instance, with the New York Female Moral Reform Society's goal of aiding prostitutes and putting the blame for their "degradation" on their male patrons.[3]

Yet Fern went beyond the purview of moral reformers by addressing broader questions concerning women's social and legal status. In this sense, her views coincided with those of the more radical reformers of her own day, such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Victoria Woodhull, and anticipated twentieth-century women's issues. Within a decade of the 1848 Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention, Fern, too, was advocating women's suffrage and property rights. As literary scholar Nancy Walker has noted, a century before Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*, Fern was writing about "misappreciated, unhappy womanhood, narrowed by lives made up of details."[4] And more than a century before domestic violence was widely recognized as a serious crime in America, Fern was advising beaten and demoralized women to divorce their husbands.

What distinguishes Fern's work from other women's rights activists of her era is the audience to which she had access. Fern was probably the first American journalist to regularly champion women's rights in a consumer medium with a large readership that cut across the divisions of gender and class. During the 1840s, Margaret Fuller, writing in Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*, argued that women should have access to education and to the professions — as did Sarah Josepha Hale in the first national women's

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1. Catherine C. Mitchell, ed., *Margaret Fuller's New York Journalism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 35.
2. Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Anchor Books, 1977), 8.
3. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Beauty, the Beast and the Militant Woman: A Case Study in Sex Roles and Social Stress in Jacksonian America," *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 109-28.
4. Nancy A. Walker, *Fanny Fern* (New York: Twayne, 1993); Fanny Fern, *Folly As It Flies* (New York: G. W. Carleton & Co., 1868), 64.

magazine, *Godey's Lady's Book*.[5] But Fern addressed a wider range of women's issues and had a weekly audience of 400,000, ten times larger than those of her predecessors.[6] More radical opinions appeared in the *Revolution* and the *Woman's Journal*, but these suffrage publications circulated primarily among upper-middle class women and did not appear until the late 1860s, toward the end of Fern's career.[7]

Fern's first book-length collection of newspaper columns, *Fern Leaves from Fanny's Port Folio* (1853), sold 100,000 copies; her next collection and her first children's book, both issued during the following year, sold another 80,000 copies, and the three together provided her with $10,000 in royalties.[8] Her columns themselves — for which she was also highly paid — drew hundreds of letters each week, mostly from women telling her their problems and fears. Biographer Joyce Warren maintains that "Fern was probably closer to the 'pulse' of American womanhood than anyone else of her generation."[9]

If her commercial success is any indication, Fern was probably closer to the pulse of the American public (men as well as women) than most writers of her generation. And Fern's generation was a distinguished one. Among her contemporaries who did not fare as well as she in the journalistic and literary marketplace of the 1850s and '60s were Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman

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5. Margaret Fuller, "The Wrongs of American Women, the Duty of American Women," *New York Tribune* 30 September 1845, quoted in Mitchell, 128-34; Ruth E. Finley, *The Lady of Godey's: Sarah Josepha Hale* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1931). Unlike Fuller, however, Hale did not advocate women's political equality with men.

6. Circulation figures for Fuller, Hale, and Fern are from, respectively: Mitchell, 9-10; Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines, 1741-1850* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), 581; and Mott, *American Journalism: A History, 1690-1960*, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 319.

7. Maurine H. Beasley and Sheila J. Gibbons, *Taking their Place: A Documentary History of Women and Journalism* (Washington, D. C.: American University Press, 1993), 81-82.

8. Joyce W. Warren, *Fanny Fern: An Independent Woman* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 117; Joseph P. McKerns, *Biographical Dictionary of American Journalism* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 545. During her twenty-one-year newspaper career, Fern published six collections of her columns: *Fern Leaves from Fanny's Port Folio* (1853), *Fern Leaves from Fanny's Portfolio* (sic), *Second Series* (1854), *Fresh Leaves* (1857), *Folly As It Flies* (1868), *Ginger-Snaps* (1870), and *Caper-Sauce* (1872). She also published three children's books, *Little Ferns for Fanny's Little Friends* (1853), *The Play-Day Book* (1857), and *The New Story Book for Children* (1864); and two novels, *Ruth Hall* (1854) and *Rose Clark* (1856).

9. Warren, 259.

10. Both Warren and David Reynolds, in *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville* (New York: Knopf, 1988), suggest that the title and cover design of Whitman's first edition of *Leaves of*

(for whom she was an early mentor)[10], and Nathaniel Hawthorne[11]; even Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1852 *Uncle Tom's Cabin* did not initially sell as well as Fern's *Ruth Hall* did.[12]

Fern's appeal lay not only in her adherence to the accepted feminine rhetorical style of the day, but also in her distinctive style. She produced short, often oddly-punctuated sentences, creating a pace Fern herself jokingly described as "pop-gun," as if she were merely transcribing a hurried conversation with a friend.[13] She wrote with tongue in cheek, employing "a black humor that was not supposed to exist in women."[14]

Fern's language, which earned her readers' devotion, has earned mixed reviews from twentieth-century historians. In her 1936 book, *Ladies of the Press*, the first history specifically of women journalists, Ishbel Ross dismissed Fern's seriousness as a newspaperwoman because of her "loud but vapid" style. Literary historian Fred Lewis Pattee characterized both her fiction and her journalism as "goody-goody inanity." Women's media historians Maurine Beasley and Sheila Gibbons acknowledge Fern's success in "enlarg[ing] women's role in society" but consider her a sentimentalist.[15] In 1954, Elizabeth Schlesinger published the first scholarly work that reexamined Fern's newspaper columns and maintained that her work was influential in advancing the nineteenth-century women's rights movement.[16] One booklet and at least two other scholarly articles published since then have recast Fern as a feminist, though full-length biographies with such a view have appeared only since 1992.[17]

Grass (1855) were imitations of Fern's first book, *Fern Leaves from Fanny's Port Folio*, published two years earlier.

11. Perhaps Fern's commercial success is one reason Hawthorne complained, in an 1855 letter to his publisher, that "America is now wholly given over to a damned mob of scribbling women, and I should have no chance of success while the public taste is occupied with their trash . . . ." In a subsequent letter to his publisher, however, Hawthorne wrote that he had read *Ruth Hall* and "enjoyed it a good deal." These letters are reprinted in Thomas Woodson, et al., eds., *Nathaniel Hawthorne: The Letters, 1853-1856*, Centenary ed., vol. 17 (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987), 303-4, 307-8.

12. The sales of *Ruth Hall* totaled 46,000 in its first four months, higher than those of *any* other American book up to that time (Warren, 109).

13. Fanny Fern, *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, ed. Joyce Warren (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1986), 291. David Reynolds compares this technique to Emily Dickinson's use of the "imagistic fragment," which also was trivialized by contemporary male critics(34).

14. Warren, 100.

15. Ishbel Ross, *Ladies of the Press* (New York: Harper, 1936), 40; Fred Lewis Pattee, *The Feminine Fifties* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1940), 118; Beasley and Gibbons, 87.

16. Elizabeth Bancroft Schlesinger, "Fanny Fern: Our Grandmothers' Mentor," *New York Historical Society Quarterly* 38 (1954): 501-19.

17. The booklet is Florence Bannard Adams' *Fanny Fern, or a Pair of Flaming Shoes* (West Trenton, N. J.: Hermitage Press, 1966). The other articles are Lauren Berlant's

All of the revisionist works are by literary scholars, as is the great majority of scholarship on Fern. Because journalism occupied twenty-one years of Fern's life, while fiction occupied only three — and since Fern's stances as a columnist anticipated twentieth-century social reform — her newspaper work deserves serious study by journalism historians. This article begins that work by offering, in addition to a biographical sketch of Fern, a textual and contextual analysis of nearly 500 of her newspaper columns, which span her career and represent about a third of her lifetime output.

How "Fanny Fern" Came to Be

It is hard to fully understand the political and social causes Fanny Fern championed in her newspaper columns — or even to understand why she became a writer — without a brief knowledge of her background.[18] She was born Sara Willis in 1811, the fifth of nine children of Hannah and Nathaniel Willis. Her father was a well-known figure in Portland, Maine, where he served as a deacon in the Presbyterian Church and worked as a printer and publisher of a Christian children's magazine.[19] After the family moved to Boston, Sara and her sisters were sent to boarding schools, including Catharine Beecher's Hartford Female Seminary. Though her own later view of women's place in society would differ greatly from that of her headmistress, as a teenager Sara received affection and

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"The Female Woman: Fanny Fern and the Form of Sentiment," *American Literary History* 3 (1991): 429-54, and Ann Douglas Wood's "The 'Scribbling Women' and Fanny Fern: Why Women Wrote," *American Quarterly* 23 (1971): 3-24. Both Joyce Warren's 1992 book and Nancy Walker's 1993 book are revisionist views of Fern's work, though Warren's is the more complete biography.

18. Except where specifically noted, this biographical information is from several sources, including Warren; Walker; Adams; Beasley and Gibbons, 87-89; McKerns, 544-45; Edward T. James, ed., *Notable American Women, 1607-1950: A Biographical Dictionary* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), 24-25; S. Austin Allibone, *A Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1870), 1520; and Grace Greenwood, "Fanny Fern — Mrs. Parton," *Eminent Women of the Age*, ed. James Parton (Hartford: S. M. Betts & Co., 1872).

19. If one believes that *Ruth Hall* was autobiographical, as considerable evidence indicates it was, then Hannah Willis was largely a passive character in the family. After her mother's death, however, Fern wrote to a friend that "all the capability for writing which I possess . . . . came from her. She had correspondence with many clergymen of the time and others, and, had she lived at this day, would have been a writer worthy of mention" (Greenwood, 67).

support from Catharine Beecher.[20] She also began a lifelong friendship with Beecher's younger sister Harriet, who was Sara's age and one of her classmates.[21]

In 1837, when she was twenty-six, Sara married Charles Eldredge, a bank clerk with whom she lived happily until his death of typhoid fever nine years later. Sara's relations with her in-laws disintegrated after Charles's death, and they offered no support for the thirty-five-year-old widow and her two daughters; neither did Sara's own family. Sara and her daughters moved into a Boston boardinghouse, where she took in sewing. This tedious and poorly-paying work — she earned seventy-five cents a week — gave her, as Joyce Warren notes, "a lifelong sympathy with working women" that she would later voice in her columns.[22] In 1849 she acquiesced to a match, made by her father, with Samuel Farrington, a Boston businessman. After two years of his verbal abuse, she left him; in another two years, during which Farrington widely slandered Sara, he divorced her.

Again in the position of having to support her daughters, Sara tried writing. She immediately made a sale — a humorous essay on the subject of "model husbands" — to the editor of the Boston-based *Olive Branch*, a religious newspaper with a progressive bent that was read throughout the East. She sent other essays to her older brother, Nathaniel Parker ("N. P.") Willis, who was by then a magazine editor in New York, but he dismissed them as amateurish and told her she was "on a mistaken track."

Sara continued to contribute essays to the *Olive Branch*, writing as "Clara," "Tabitha," and, finally, "Fanny Fern." Most women writers of the day used pseudonyms (flowery pen names were especially common[23]), but Sara had two additional incentives: the scandal of her divorce, and her family's expressed disapproval of her writing. A pseudonym would hide her activity and income from them; what's more, she could publish under a name that did not connect her to either her abusive second husband or her first husband's hostile parents. Sara used her new identity socially as well as professionally, and later she legally changed her name to Fanny Fern.

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20. Unlike Fern and other female reformers of her time, Catharine Beecher approved of and promoted the idea of a separate "women's sphere," a world of domesticity and moral instruction in which, Beecher believed, American women could gain and exercise power within a rapidly-changing nineteenth-century society.
21. The lives of Fern and Harriet Beecher Stowe contained many parallels: they were the same age; their formative years were dominated by religious relatives and by the Hartford Female Seminary experience; both had children who died young; they received their first national recognition as writers in 1852; and both were chided by male critics for their emotional, confidential writing styles.
22. Warren, 81-82.
23. Beasley and Gibbons, 87.

Three Bestsellers — and an Act of Spite

By early 1852 Fern (as she is referred to hereafter) was contributing to both the *Olive Branch* and another Boston-based newspaper, the *True Flag*, earning two dollars a column and producing three columns a week. During the fall of 1852, she wrote on an exclusive basis for the New York *Musical World and Times* (despite its title, a general-interest publication). Though it lasted only three months, this arrangement was significant in that the *Musical World and Times* offered her a regular salary, rather than paying her on a per-piece basis; thus she became, according to several journalism histories, the "first woman newspaper columnist" in America.[24] When she resumed writing for the Boston papers in early 1853, they were forced to follow suit and offer her salary commitments as well.

Fern very quickly acquired a wide national audience and reputation because of a practice that, ironically, hurt her financially: the absence of enforceable copyright law in the mid-nineteenth century. Her articles were freely copied in newspapers all across the country. Her identity was also becoming a matter of considerable speculation.[25]

In 1853, two years into her writing career, Fern accepted a book publisher's offer to issue a collection of her newspaper columns. It was called *Fern Leaves from Fanny's Port Folio*, and within one year it sold nearly 100,000 copies in the United States and Great Britain.[26] Its success enabled Fern to leave Boston for New York. There, she assembled a second collection of her columns and produced a work of fiction: *Ruth Hall*, an autobiographical novel in which the title character learns she must look out for herself and earn her own living. The book sold well (more than 50,000 copies within eight months of its publication) but was not well received critically. Reviewers castigated Fern for her irreverent portrayal of men as self-important and unreliable.[27]

What might have been a death blow to Fern's career was delivered the year after the publication of *Ruth Hall*. William Moulton, the editor of the Boston *True Flag*, who was angry because Fern had stopped writing for him, anonymously published a book called *The Life and Beauties of Fanny Fern* in

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24. Among them are the two previously-cited major works by Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism* and *A History of American Magazines*.

25. Warren, 92, 101-02, 330, #22. Some readers guessed that "Fanny Fern" was Harriet Beecher Stowe; others suspected the real author was Fern's own brother N. P.

26. Sales figures for *Fern Leaves* and *Ruth Hall* are from Allibone, 1520. Emily Dickinson liked *Fern Leaves* so much that she read it aloud to her family and friends (Reynolds, 33).

27. One of the few to offer praise was Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who, writing in the short-lived feminist newspaper *Una*, was pleased with the book's message "that God has given to woman sufficient brain and muscle to work out her own destiny unaided and alone" (Warren, 140).

1855.[28] Purportedly an official biography of Fern, *The Life and Beauties* not only personally and professionally slandered Fern — implying that as a divorcée she had loose morals, and stating quite clearly that she had little talent and did not meet deadlines — but also revealed her real name. The final insult was that more than three-quarters of the book consisted of reprints of columns Fern had written for the Boston newspapers, each with a short, sarcastic introduction by Moulton; thus, he profited from her work while ridiculing her.

Celebrity Columnist of the *New York Ledger*

Nevertheless, Moulton's *Life and Beauties* served to increase Fern's already considerable fame. At the same time her star was rising, so was the ambition of Robert Bonner, the new publisher and editor of the weekly *New York Ledger*. Frank Luther Mott described the *Ledger* as typical of the many mid-century "popular Saturday and Sunday miscellanies [that] were more like magazines in content than like newspapers; they flourished upon stories, moral essays, and verse, with some admixture of travel sketches, science, art, and a few woodcuts." But Bonner's paper was unusual in its pioneering use of the signed weekly column, thus according the columnist the status of "highly-paid celebrity."[29]

The first writer on whom Bonner bestowed such an honor was Fanny Fern, though she was probably already a bona fide American celebrity.[30] His 1855 offer to pay her $100 per column — not per article, but per *column of type* — was unprecedented. The offer was for a piece of fiction rather than journalistic writing; the resulting story, "Fanny Ford," ran serially in the *Ledger* throughout June of 1855 and totaled ten columns of type (Fern was paid $1,000). Bonner immediately followed this highly-publicized coup with an offer of an exclusive contract to write a weekly opinion column in the *Ledger*. Historians disagree on the rate Fern was paid for this work; some say she received $25 a week, while others say she continued to receive $100 per column.[31] At either rate, it was an attractive offer, and Fern accepted it. Bonner announced his acquisition by buying a full page of advertising space in a rival paper, the *New York Herald*, filled with type repeating one sentence: "Fanny Fern writes only for the

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28. Warren, Walker, and Adams all attribute *The Life and Beauties of Fanny Fern* (New York: H. Long & Brother, 1855) to William Moulton, though it was published without a byline.

29. Mott, *American Journalism*, 319; Walker, 25.

30. The word "celebrity" perhaps falls short in describing the impression Fanny Fern made on Americans in the 1850s and '60s. A train conductor wrote to tell her that he had seen a Pullman car named after her (Warren, 286); there was also Fanny Fern Tobacco, particularly ironic in light of the many anti-smoking columns she wrote (Walker, 101).

31. Joyce Warren claims that the weekly rate was lowered to $25; Mott (*American Journalism*, 319) and other earlier sources maintain that it stayed at $100.

Ledger."[32] Fern's column ran in the *Ledger* every single week from January of 1856 until her death in October of 1872.

Fern was the first of a long list of "name" conquests Bonner would make, and her record-setting fee was soon eclipsed by what he paid other writers for their services. Charles Dickens received $5,000 for one short story, and the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher was paid $30,000 for his novel *Norwood*. Other well-known writers who contributed to the newspaper included William Cullen Bryant, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Louisa May Alcott, Horace Greeley, Alice and Phoebe Cary, Edward Everett, E. D. E. N. Southworth, Lydia Sigourney, and James Gordon Bennett.[33]

Such famous bylines were no doubt one reason for the *Ledger*'s financial success, but like many urban newspapers of the time it also benefitted from several consequences of American industrialization: urbanization, the growth of the middle class, and the increasingly common phenomenon of leisure time. The paper's circulation was soon the highest of any newspaper in the country, climbing during the late 1850s and early 1860s to a peak of 400,000 — a figure Mott called "stupendous for that day." Among the new readers was a steadily growing proportion of women for whom, as Florence Bannard Adams noted, "the Bible and the newspapers were . . . daily food."[34]

This new female market increased the power and visibility of Bonner's female contributors, especially Fern.[35] A certainty that she was being read by large numbers of women surely accounted for the voice and subject matter Fern chose for her columns. Though she had already developed a signature style characterized by strong opinions and humor, Fern perfected her craft in the pages of the *Ledger*. She began to pattern her columns in one of two ways: using a quote or maxim as a springboard for commentary, or responding to a news item — both devices that "prefigure[d] the characteristics of twentieth-century newspaper and magazine columnists."[36] More and more, she tackled serious and controversial subjects.

By then, she may have felt herself on surer ground, since her circumstances, both professional and personal, had stabilized. She had survived Moulton's attack with her readership and her paycheck intact. She and her daughters had a happier home life by 1856, the year Fern married James Parton,

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32. Walker, 99.

33. These bylines and prices are from several sources, including Warren, 147-48; Adams, 12; Walker, 25; Mott, *History of American Magazines*, 358, 361; and Frederic Hudson, *Journalism in the United States, from 1690 to 1872* (New York: Harper, 1873), 650-51.

34. Mott, *American Journalism*, 319; Adams, 16.

35. The phenomenon of "lady writers" — reflected in the *Ledger* by famous names including Fern, Stowe, Alcott, Southworth, Sigourney, and the Cary sisters — was evident throughout the publishing industry. The July 1854 issue of *Putnam's Monthly* noted: "A most alarming avalanche of female authors has been pouring upon us for the past three months. The success of Uncle Tom and Fanny Fern has been the cause, doubtless" (Mott, *History of American Magazines*, 170).

36. Walker, 35-36.

a journalist and biographer eleven years her junior who was supportive of her work. And she had a loyal readership, particularly among New York City's women, hundreds of whom wrote wrote letters to her every week.

While Fern's topics were many and varied during her twenty-one-year career as a columnist, the excerpts below offer a sample of the most important aspects of her journalism: her primary subject matter, the rights of women and the poor; her often radical viewpoints; and the rhetoric that enabled her to maintain her wide popularity despite her outspokenness.

On "Women's Sphere"

In several of her columns Fern categorically dismissed "the old cry of 'a woman's sphere being home,'" noting in 1867 that such an opinion was one "you hear oftenest from men whose home is only a place to feed and sleep in."[37] A year later she maintained that most women of her day led

> . . . lives of unbroken monotony, and have much more need of exhilarating influences than men, whose life is out of doors in the breathing, active world. Don't tell me of shoemakers at their lasts, and tailors at their needles. Do either ever have to lay down their customers' coats and shoes fifty times a day, and wonder when the day is over why their work is *not* done, though they have struggled through fire and water to finish it? . . . Do not their customers talk their beloved politics to them while they stitch, and do not their "confrères" run for a bottle of ale and crack merry jokes with them as their work progresses?[38]

Fern encouraged women to get out of their homes, literally (through exercise) and figuratively (through mental stimulation), if not also through paid work. She advised them to read widely and to write, in diaries or otherwise, for psychological release and self-expression, insisting that it was not "safe" for women "to shut down so much that cries out for sympathy and expression."[39] She praised mothers who "early cultivate a taste for reading in their *daughters*" so that the girls might become "dignified" and "independent of . . . vacuity."[40]

Similarly, she encouraged women to live healthy lives free of unnatural physical restraints. She crusaded against restrictive women's clothing and against what she termed the "fashionable invalidism" of the day: "I hope to live

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37. Fern, *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, 344.
38. Fern, *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, 308.
39. Fern, *Folly As It Flies*, 62. Fern further attempted to encourage women to write by arguing that women are more natural writers than men. In making her case, she was also defending her own style of journalism: women, she wrote, "are not above narrating the *little* things which bring up a person or a scene more vividly to the mind than anything else. They write *naturally*, as they talk . . ."
40. Fern, *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, 322.

to see the time when [women] consider it a *disgrace* to be sick," she wrote in the 1860s. She blamed most women's health problems on a combination of clothing, lifestyle, and vanity: ". . . a woman who laces so tightly that she breathes only by a rare accident; . . . who has ball-robes and jewels in plenty, but who owns neither an umbrella, nor a waterproof cloak, nor a pair of thick boots; who . . . never exercises and complains of 'total want of appetite,' . . . is simply a disgusting nuisance." As for herself, Fern confessed, "I walk, not ride, I own stout boots [and] a waterproof cloak, and no diamonds. I like a nice bit of beefsteak and a glass of ale, and anybody else who wants it may eat pap."[41]

Fern believed that women should be allowed to wear men's clothing, as both she and her elder daughter, Grace, sometimes did.[42] Her chief reasons were health and comfort: ". . . they who choose may crook their backs . . . for fashion, and then send for the doctor to straighten them," she wrote in 1858. "I've as good a right to preserve the healthy body God gave me, as if I were not a woman." But she realized that women could find freedom beyond mere comfort in men's apparel: "Think of the old maids (and weep) who have to stay at home evening after evening, when . . . with a coat, pants and hat, they might go abroad, instead of sitting there with their noses flattened against the window-pane, looking vainly for 'the Coming Man.' "[43]

Fern's ideal of American womanhood was what she called "the Coming Woman": "a bright-eyed, full-chested, broad-shouldered, large-souled, intellectual being; able to walk, able to eat, able to fulfill her maternal destiny [or equally able] to go to her grave happy, self-poised, and serene, though unwedded."[44]

On Women and Work — In and Out of the Home

As newspaper audiences grew, so did the diversity of women within them. Fern's column was read not just by upper-class "literary ladies" but also by "run-of-the-mill housewives and working women."[45] She addressed all three groups in the many columns she devoted to the subject of women and work.

Remembering her own experience, she wrote of the economic necessity that forced many women to work, chiding those who faulted such women for trying to earn a living — especially if they succeeded. "No matter how isolated

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41. Fern, *Folly*, 85-87. Fern's standards for health and education applied to men as well as women. The ideal husband and father, Fern wrote, was one with "a constitution and principles as sound as those he so properly requires in the wife of his choice and the mother of his children." (*Folly*, 268).
42. Warren, 183.
43. Fern, *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, 300-4. Fern also wrote that a woman in men's clothing could "pick up contraband bits of science in a Medical Museum, forbidden to crinoline, and hold conversations with intelligent men, who supposing you to be a man, consequently talk sense to you"; she might even "taste that nice lager beer."
44. Fern, *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, 310.
45. Adams, 19.

or destitute [a woman's] condition," she wrote, "the majority would consider it more 'feminine,' would she unobtrusively gather up her thimble, and, retiring into some out-of-the-way place, gradually scoop out her coffin with it, than to develop [a] smart turn for business."[46]

But she defended the working rights of any woman, even one whose husband or father could support her. No profession should be closed to a woman with the talent and inclination to try it, Fern asserted. Such a woman "feels well and independent in consequence [of working], and holds up her head with the best, and asks no favors."[47] In a column on women lecturers, she wrote:

> . . . if she can draw an audience, why shouldn't she fill her pocket? Is it less commendable than marrying somebody — anybody — for the sake of being supported, and finding out too late, as many women do, that it is the toughest possible way of getting a living? . . . At least, she circulates about in the fresh air, among fresh people, making many acquaintances, and let us hope, some friends; instead of knawing the bone of monotony all her colorless life . . . . If conservatism is shocked to hear a woman speak in public, let conservatism stay away . . . . May a good Providence multiply female lecturers, female sculptors, female artists of every sort, female authors, female astronomers, female bookkeepers . . . .[48]

Fern devoted several columns to the lot of "working girls" at the mercy of upper-class employers. She not only sympathized with these women's problems, but also addressed her wealthier readers, implying or stating outright that they ought to be concerned — and that in some cases wealthier women were *responsible* for the unhappiness of their poorer sisters. At a time when books advised middle- and upper-class women on how to deal with "the servant problem," Fern wrote:

> I am not sure my sympathies are not enlisted much more on the side of servants than of their mistresses, who at any moment can show them the door at their capricious will without a passport to any other place of shelter. Their lot is often at best a hard one . . . . I wish mistresses would sometimes ask themselves how long . . . *they* could render faithful, conscientious labor? Feeling that doing well, there was no word of praise; and that doing ill, there was no excuse

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46. Fern, *Folly*, 321.
47. Fern, *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, 361.
48. Fern, *Folly*, 210-12. Though Fern herself did not lecture, she defended those women who did and pointed out the double standards often applied to them. In one column, for instance, she wondered "why reporters, in making mention of lady speakers, always consider it to be necessary to report, fully and *firstly*, the dresses worn by them?" (*Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, 369-70).

> or palliation; that falling sick or disabled, from overwork or natural causes, there was no sympathy, but only nervous anxiety for a speedy substitute.[49]

To readers who might say such concerns were none of her business, Fern wrote, "Make it yours, then: for a woman's heart beats in your kitchen, — over your wash-tub, — over your ironing-table, — down in your cellar, — up in your garret. A kind word is such a little thing to you — so much to her. *Your* cup is so full to overflowing, — *hers* often so empty . . . ."[50]

Fern wrote of the indignities also suffered by women working in seemingly more prestigious jobs. Private teachers had more in common with domestic servants than with their students' mothers, constantly "trembling lest by some unintentional oversight of theirs they lose the approbation of employers, and with it their means of subsistence." She expresssed her disgust at the male shop owner who, in the presence of customers, bullies his young female clerks and then "turns, with a sweet smile and dulcet voice, to yourself, and inquires, 'what else he can have the pleasure of showing you?' You are tempted to reply, 'Sir, I would like you to show me that you can respect womanhood, although it may not be hedged about with fine raiment.' "[51]

Fern was ahead of her time in identifying certain issues of concern to working women. One was sexual harassment. Addressing a hypothetical hotel waitress faced with a "coxcomb who considers it necessary to preface his request for an omelette, with '*My dear*,' " Fern suggested she "annoint him with a 'HASTY plate of soup.' " Another such issue was equal pay. In one column, she demanded that "the practice [be] amended by which a female clerk, who performs her duty equally well with a male clerk, receives less salary, simply because she is a woman."[52]

Fern claimed that women who worked at home were entitled to the same respect, and the same access to money, as women who worked in paid positions. In an 1869 column, she expressed the "disgust with which I am nauseated, at the idea of any decent, intelligent, self-respecting, capable wife, ever being obliged *to ask* for that which she so laboriously earns, and which is just as much hers by right, as the money that her husband receives from his customers is *his*."[53]

Complaining that "matrimony [is] a one-sided partnership," Fern wrote of the exhausting work load of middle- and lower-class homemakers, calling the

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49. Fern, *Folly*, 112, 116.
50. Fern, *Folly*, 323-24. Much of Fern's punctuation is, by today's standards, grammatically incorrect. But since punctuation and typographical style seem to have been part of Fern's message (see footnote 13), no editing has been done here with regard to either her punctuation or her frequent use of italics.
51. Fern, *Folly*, 319; *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, 340.
52. Fern, *Fern Leaves from Fanny's Portfolio, Second Series* (Auburn & Buffalo, N.Y.: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1854), 332-33; *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, 302.
53. Fern, *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, 364-65.

results of that load "legal murder."[54] This passage illustrates Fern's position on housework and the care of large families:

> There are self-sacrificing mothers who need somebody to say to them, "Stop! you have just to make your choice now, between death and life. You have expended all the strength you have on hand — and must lay in a new stock before any more work can be done by you." . . . let me tell you that if you think you are doing God service, or anybody else, by using up a year's strength in a week, you have made a sinful mistake . . . . when you are dead, all the king's men can't make you stand on your feet again, that's plain. Well, then — don't be dead. In the first place, go out a part of every day, rain or shine, for the fresh air, and don't tell me you can't; at least not while you can stop to embroider your children's clothes. As to "dressing to go out," don't dress. If you are clean and whole that's enough . . . . The moral of all which is, that if nobody else will take care of you, you must take care of yourself.[55]

On Women's Suffrage and Political (In)equality

Fern also was outspoken, particularly in the later years of her career, on the subject of women's suffrage, despite the fact that Robert Bonner, her editor, frequently wrote editorials against the idea.[56] Fern addressed the topic directly and clearly. "I am often asked the question, 'Do I believe that women should vote?'" began one of her columns in the 1860s. "Most assuredly," she answered. She dismissed petty objections to suffrage, such as the fear that women would be "thrown into rowdy company of both sexes" at polling booths. (This concern, Fern noted, never occurred to the man who expected his wife "to explore all sorts of localities in search of articles needed for family consumption.") With regard to women who opposed suffrage, she wrote, in a column that linked economic well-being to political rights, "I feel only pity, that, torpidly and selfishly content with her ribbons and dresses, [a woman] may never see or think of those other women who may be lifted out of their wretched condition of low wages and starvation, by this very lever of power."[57]

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54. Fern, *Fern Leaves, Second Series*, 114; *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, 366-67. Fern's term "legal murder" echoes the idea of a woman's "civil death" — her loss of property rights and legal identity — upon marriage, one of the injustices listed in the "Declaration of Sentiments" read at the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention ("Selections from the *History of Woman Suffrage*," *The Feminist Papers: From Adams to de Beauvoir*, ed. Alice S. Rossi [New York: Columbia University Press, 1973], 417).
55. Fern, *Folly*, 58-60.
56. Schlesinger, 514.
57. Fern, *Folly*, 65-66; *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, 316-17.

Lack of the vote was only one of many legal problems women faced, in Fern's view. In an 1859 Fourth of July column, Fern confessed that she didn't feel patriotic: "I'm glad we are all free; but as a woman — I shouldn't know it, didn't some orator tell me . . . . Can I cross Broadway without having a policeman tackled (*sic*) to my elbow? . . . Can I be a Senator, that I may hurry up that millenial International Copyright Law?[58] Can I *even* be President? Bah — you know I can't. *'Free!'* "[59]

Fern was particularly concerned about married women's legal rights — an issue on which her views were informed by personal experience. She wrote of husbands who were physically abusive, but she also acknowledged the damage done by emotional abuse, even in the "best" marriages: "That the better educated husband murders with sharp words instead of sharp blows, makes it none the less murder." After seeing a newspaper notice placed by a husband whose wife had left him, in which the husband wrote, "if you will come [home] now, I will forgive you . . . if not, I shall attend to your case without delay," Fern penned advice to the wife: ". . . don't allow yourself to be badgered or frightened into anything . . . . tell him you are ready for him."[60] In this 1857 column, Fern urged women in bad marriages to get out, not suffer nobly:

> . . . there are aggravated cases for which the law provides no remedy — from which it affords no protection . . . . in such cases, let a woman who *has the self-sustaining power* quietly take her fate in her own hands, and right herself. Of course she will be misjudged and abused. *It is for her to choose whether she can better bear this at hands from which she has a rightful claim for love and protection, or from a nine-days-wonder-loving public.* These are bold words; but they are needed words — words whose full import I have well considered . . . .[61]

On the Ills of Poverty and 'Mistaken' Philanthropy

Fern frequently wrote about women and children in her columns, usually lamenting their dependence on the whims of men. Similarly, she devoted a number of columns to how wealthy New Yorkers viewed and treated the poor. In one column she criticized "the unwisdom of philanthropists who make virtue so unsmiling . . . . who stop to bind up and pour oil into the wounds of the suffering." In another, she gave satirical advice to the upper-class

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58. This reference is to Fern's own lack of protection from copyright violations of her work.

59. Fern, *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, 314-15. A similar complaint is heard in the satirical lyrics Fern wrote for a song called "Woman's Rights" (New York: William Hall & Son, 1853; Box O, Sheet Music, The Alice Marshall Collection, Penn State Harrisburg, Middletown, Pa.).

60. Fern, *Folly*, 261; *Fern Leaves, Second Series*, 133.

61. Fern, *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, 294.

man confronted by one in need: ". . . put on the most stoical, 'get thee behind me' expression you can muster . . . . button your coat up tighter over your pocketbook and give him a piece of — good advice . . . ."[62]

Such treatment, Fern added, had consequences for which the wealthy (and others who ministered to the poor) had to accept part of the blame. In a column sympathizing with a prostitute, Fern speculated that "They who make long prayers, and wrap themselves up in self-righteousness, as with a garment, turned a deaf ear, as she plead (*sic*) for the bread of honest toil."[63] After an 1858 visit to a New York City prison, she wondered of its inmates, "How many times when their stomachs have been empty, some full-fed, whining disciple has presented them with a Bible or a Tract, saying, 'Be ye warmed and filled.' "[64]

A few of Fern's columns on urban poverty were as graphic and critical as the work done half a century later by the journalists historians tend to think of as the first generation of muckrakers. Following her visit to a lower-class neighborhood, she described its squalor, and then questioned the priorities of a so-called democracy that, in 1864, was divided by class as well as by war:

> It was a warm day; there were slaughter-houses, with pools of blood in front, round which gambolled pigs and children; there were piles of garbage in the middle of the street . . . emitting the most beastly odors. Uncombed, unwashed girls, and ragged, fighting lads swarmed on every door step, and emerged from narrow, slimy alleys. Weary, worn-looking mothers administered hasty but well-aimed slaps at draggled, neglected children, while fathers smoked, drank, and swore . . . . *It was a little piece of hell.* I grew sick, physically and mentally, as I staggered, rather than walked along . . . . There must be horrible blame somewhere for such a state of things on this beautiful island . . . . Alas! if some of the money spent on corporation-dinners, on Fourth of July fireworks, and on public balls, where rivers of champagne are worse than wasted, were laid aside for the cleanliness and purification of these terrible localities which slay more victims than the war is doing . . . .[65]

Conclusion

A survey of Fanny Fern's newspaper columns reveals a writer who was a serious journalist and, by twentieth-century standards, a feminist. By any

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62. Fern, *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, 336; *Fern Leaves, Second Series*, 333-34.
63. Fern, *Fern Leaves, Second Series*, 268. Fern's columns on prostitution are notable for her candor, particularly since she was directly addressing middle- and upper-class women.
64. Fern, *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, 305.
65. Fern, *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, 327-28.

standard, Fern was an original and influential voice in both journalism and literary circles of her day. A rival newspaperwoman wrote of Fern in 1872, "She sails with all her canvas spread, by a chart of her own." An 1870 biographical sketch was equally admiring: "She dips her pen in her heart, and writes out her own feelings . . . . She dares to be original. She has no fear of critics or of the public before her eyes. She conquers a peace with them by sheer force of audacity."[66]

Why has such a pioneering and distinctive voice been largely ignored by historians for a century? Fern's viewpoints on women's rights — unpalatable to many scholars not just in the nineteenth century, but, as Joyce Warren has noted, for many decades afterward — provide one possible answer. Another is the "black humor" and "pop-gun" writing style that critics, then and now, rarely seem to accept in a woman writer. A third reason may be the fact that Fern's success occurred in the mainstream, in a wide-circulation, celebrity-driven newspaper, rather than a smaller, more literary periodical, and thus was more lowbrow than highbrow. Fern was popular in the literal sense: her work was for ordinary people, and her most dedicated supporters were ordinary women. Noting that few among Fern's fans were "literary Brahmins," Joyce Warren asks, "Who among her supporters — the factory women, the shopgirls, the overworked farm wives, the tired mothers — had the knowledge or the time . . . to ensure that her works were printed and reprinted, to bring her . . . message to succeeding generations?"[67]

Given these possibilities, however, the absence of Fern from so many works of American women's history is especially curious.[68] It may be that she has been not necessarily undiscovered, but rather sidestepped, because she does not easily fit into twentieth-century characterizations of the nineteenth-century women's movement. Her feminine rhetoric (not to mention her name) does not square with her strong political positions. In addition to her ongoing support for women's suffrage, Fern's published opinions coincided with those of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucy Stone on women's legal rights within

66. Greenwood, 78; Allibone, 1520.

67. Warren, 178.

68. Particularly remarkable is the omission of any information about the nature of Fern's newspaper work in Marion Marzolf's *Up from the Footnote: A History of Women Journalists* (New York: Hastings House, 1977), an otherwise excellent restoration of women writers and editors to journalism history; Marzolf mentions Fern's name in passing, though incorrectly places her in Philadelphia (22). Among the more general American women's studies overviews consulted, few include Fern, and most that do — such as Eleanor Flexner's *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966) — briefly mention her as a "domestic novelist" rather than a journalist. Some recent works, however, offer more comprehensive entries for Fern. One example is Doris Weatherford's encyclopedic *American Women's History* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1994); another is Angela G. Dorenkamp. et. al., *Images of Women in American Popular Culture* (New York: Harcourt, 1985), which features excerpts from three of Fern's newspaper columns.

marriage; those of Susan B. Anthony on prostitution and domestic abuse; those of Sarah Grimké and Emma Willard on women's education; those of Victoria Woodhull on women in business; and those of Woodhull's sister, Tennessee Claflin, on women's clothing.[69] Yet Fern's personal prose, her preference for anecdote over sermon, her exclamations, and her frequent use of humor separate her treatment of such issues from the more earnest writings of other activists--and from what feminist scholars have traditionally considered serious reform advocacy.[70]

Fern's relatively recent reappearance in the world of literary scholarship informs modern understanding of mid-nineteenth-century fiction, and she deserves serious attention from contemporary journalism scholars as well. Fern anticipated the topics and style of twentieth-century editorial writing in her columns; she pioneered the business-world concept that women journalists could be not just well read, but also well paid; and she brought clarity, passion, and personality to the developing craft of newspaper writing. Like the title character of her novel *Ruth Hall*, Fanny Fern "had the courage to call things by their right names, and the independence to express herself boldly."[71] If only for that reason, she is worth a second look from journalists entering the twenty-first century.

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69. For more information about the women whose opinions are mentioned here, see, among other works: Nancy Cott, ed., *Root of Bitterness: Documents of the Social History of American Women* (New York: Dutton, 1972); Flexner, *Century of Struggle*; Kerber and De Hart, *Women's America*; Arlene Kiser, ed., *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly: The Lives and Writings of Notorious Victoria Woodhull and Her Sister Tennessee Claflin* (Washington, N. J.: Times Change Press, 1972); and Aileen S. Kraditor, *Up from the Pedestal: Selected Writings in the History of American Feminism* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968).

70. Indeed, Fern's commercial success — and thus the *impact* of her reform work — may call for a reconsideration not only of our definitions of terms such as "serious," but also of the assumptions we make about what, in fact, "popular" opinion really was in the mid-nineteenth century.

71. Fern, *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*, 133.

Crosses Before a Government Vampire: How Four Newspapers Addressed the First Amendment In Editorials, 1962-1991

By James B. McPherson

A study of more than 30,000 editorials found that during seven one-year periods spanning three decades, four newspapers rarely used their editorials to support First Amendment rights or responsibilities for the press. Raised is the question of whether editorial writers generally believed the need for press freedom was obvious, so they need not promote it, or whether they may have been reluctant to discuss the issue because doing so might imply a communitarian "responsibility," rather than an individualistic "right" for a free press.

Even before the U.S. Constitution was ratified in 1787, members of the media and government alike asserted that the press served a "watchdog" function.[1] How well the press has fulfilled that role, and even what is included in definitions of a "watchdog" and of the First Amendment in general, may have changed over time.[2] The press has frequently been condemned for

1. Probably the most famous quote is Thomas Jefferson's statement about preferring newspapers without a government to a government without newspapers: *Letters and Addresses of Thomas Jefferson*, William B. Parker and Jonas Viles, eds. (New York: Grossett & Dunlap, 1903), 53. Also see *Interpretations of Journalism*, Frank L. Mott and Ralph D. Casey, eds. (New York: F.S. Crofts & Co., 1937).
2. Jeffrey A. Smith, *Printers and Press Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

failing in its watchdog role.[3] It has also been criticized for succeeding in it, particularly during times of national crisis.[4]

As noted by David Kelley and Roger Donway, classic liberals viewed press freedom as having two important roles. First and most important was the watchdog function; second was the democratic purpose of providing information and fostering debate.[5] Historically, however, the order of those two roles has commonly been switched.[6]

The 1964 *New York Times v. Sullivan*[7] decision may have emboldened the press, which many have said generally neglected its watchdog responsibility at least until the *New York Times* published the Pentagon Papers — and won the support of the Supreme Court — in 1971.[8] The 1970s also saw the

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3. This condemnation has been widespread, and is included in the following: Richard Bolling, "An Oldtimer's View of the Press," and Michael Green, "Nobody Covers the House," in *Congress and the News Media*, Robert O. Blanchard, ed. (New York: Hastings House, 1974), 153-164, 322-331; David S. Broder, *Behind the Front Page* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 16-17; David M. Rubin, "The Security of Secrecy," in *Risky Business: Communicating Issues of Science, Risk, and Public Policy*, Lee Wilkins and Philip Patterson, eds. (New York; Greenwood, 1991), 131-150; Timothy Crouse, *The Boys On the Bus* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1972); Robert D. Holsworth and J. Harry Wray, *American Politics and Everyday Life*, 2d ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 109-125; Martin A. Lee and Norman Solomon, *Unreliable Sources: A Guide to Detecting Bias in the News Media* (New York: Lyle Stuart, a division of Carol Publishing, 1990); *Facts on File, Media Controversies*, Lester A. Sobel, ed. (New York: Facts on File, 1981); William A. Henry III, "Freedom and Accountability: A Search for Solution," in *Media Freedom and Accountability*, Everette E. Dennis, Donald M. Gillmor, and Theodore Glasser, eds. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 153-177; and Richard Senter, Jr., Larry T. Reynolds, and David Gruenenfelder, "The Presidency and the Print Media: Who Controls the News?" *Sociological Quarterly* 21 (1986): 91-105.

4. See Theodore Peterson, "The Social Responsibility Theory," in *Four Theories of the Press*, Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm, eds. (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press reprint, 1973), 78-79; James Keogh, *President Nixon and the Press* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1972), 1-15; Haynes Johnson, "The Irreconcilable Conflict Between Press and Government: Whose Side Are You On?" in *Secrecy and Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 165-178; and John C. Merrill, *The Imperative of Freedom* (New York: Hastings House, 1974), 116-119. Merrill argues the watchdog role should not be granted to the media.

5. David Kelley and Roger Donway, "Liberalism and Free Speech," in *Democracy and the Mass Media*, Judith Lichtenberg, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 70-71.

6. Doris A. Graber, "News and Democracy: Are Their Paths Diverging?" *Roy W. Howard Public Lecture* 3 (Bloomington: Indiana University School of Journalism, 1992), 4.

7. 376 U.S. 254.

8. Rubin, "Security of Secrecy," 134. However, Herbert B. Swope said more than forty years ago that reporters were not as good as they had once been, and that "Too much emphasis these days is laid upon good writing instead of good getting. There are too many press agents who substitute for the reporter." See preface, *A Treasury of Great*

strengthening of the Freedom of Information Act and the formation of Investigative Reporters and Editors, the first national organization dedicated to investigative journalism in the mainstream press. The period is commonly recognized as a heyday of sorts for watchdog journalism, a style of reporting that some argue soon faded again, or was effectively squelched.[9]

Vincent Blasi maintained that most of the Supreme Court's decisions have been based on the marketplace concepts of self-government expressed by John Milton and Alexander Meiklejohn, rather than the checking value Blasi deemed more appropriate.[10] Scholars usually credit Milton's *Areopagitica* with providing the first stone in the foundation of a "marketplace of ideas," which was to contribute much to First Amendment ideals.[11] That value was perhaps best defined for First Amendment researchers — and future Supreme Court justices — in 1948 by Meiklejohn, who argued that all information necessary for self-government should be protected.[12]

Some have even maintained that the press is required under the First Amendment to provide either marketplace or watchdog information.[13] That communitarian "social responsibility" was perhaps most debated after a national commission published *A Free and Responsible Press* in 1947; the report was widely criticized by the working press.[14]

However, determining the Constitutional founders' intent has never been simple, even for the courts. In Todd Simon's words, "The building blocks of precedent have been fashioned into a rococo structure that stuns rather than pleases the eye."[15]

Reporting, Louis L. Snyder and Richard B. Morris, eds. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1949), xxvii-xxviii.

9. Rubin, "Security of Secrecy," 134; Eve Pell, *The Big Chill* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984); and Richard O. Curry, *Freedom at Risk: Secrecy, Censorship, and Repression in the 1980s*, Richard O. Curry, ed. (Philadelphia; Temple University Press).

10. Vincent Blasi, "The Checking Value in First Amendment Theory," *American Bar Foundation Research Journal* (1977): 521-649.

11. John Milton, *Areopagitica*, Isabel Rivers, ed. (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell & Company, 1973).

12. Alexander Meiklejohn, *Free Speech and its Relation to Self-Government* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1948).

13. Theories of the press are discussed in various works, including: Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm, *Four Theories of the Press;* and Elizabeth Banks Hindman, "First Amendment Theories and Press Responsibility: The Work of Zechariah Chafee, Thomas Emerson, Vincent Blasi, and Edwin Baker," *Journalism Quarterly* 69 (1992): 48-64.

14. The Commission on Freedom of the Press, *A Free and Responsible Press* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947); Warren G. Bovee, "Horace Greeley and Social Responsibility," *Journalism Quarterly* 63 (1986): 251-259; Alfred Balk, "The Voluntary Model: Living with 'Public Watchdogs,' " in *Media Freedom and Accountability* 62; and Elie Abel, "Hutchins Revisited: Thirty-five Years of Social Responsibility Theory," in *The Responsibilities of Journalism*, Rober Schmuhl, ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 40.

15. Todd F. Simon, "The Indeterminate Future of the First Amendment," *Journalism Quarterly* 69 (1992): 28-36.

From a less external perspective, relatively few studies address what may be the most important question about watchdog or marketplace roles: How does the press view its own responsibility?

In a series of studies with implied marketplace considerations, Hynds found most newspaper editors indicate they provide a forum for exchanging information. But in comparing 1983 to eight years earlier, more editors said they chose columnists for their ability to draw readers, while fewer said they tried to provide a balance of liberal and conservative columnists.[16] Bridges noted that while more than ninety-five percent of editors surveyed agreed it was important for newspapers to investigate government claims, two of the lowest scores were for being a skeptical "adversary" of public officials and of business.[17]

Perhaps the best discussion of journalists and their views, both historic and contemporary, is offered by David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, who categorized journalists as having three distinct (though not exclusive) possible roles: an adversarial function, an interpretive-investigative role, and an "information dissemination" role.[18] It seems logical that the first two of those might be seen as supporting a watchdog function, the third a marketplace function. Weaver and Wilhoit found that the interpretive-investigative role was considered important by almost two-thirds of those polled, information dissemination by just over half, and an adversarial stance by only seventeen percent. More important, perhaps, was the finding that "persons with supervisory, editorial authority tend to lean toward the disseminator role and to avoid either the adversarial or interpreter positions."[19] They also found that "the items calling for analytical approaches — investigating claims, analyzing complex problems, discussing national policy, and developing intellectual interests — are less likely to be ranked as important now than they were ten years ago."[20] In a 1992 follow-up study, Weaver and Wilhoit found that "for the most part, the perceptions of journalistic roles are broadly similar to those of a decade ago."[21]

John Lofton offers another valuable discussion of historical press roles. The first two sentences of his final chapter go directly to the concerns of this article:

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16. Ernest C. Hynds, "Editorial, Opinion Pages Still Have Vital Roles at Most Newspapers," *Journalism Quarterly* 61 (1984): 634-639.
17. Janet A. Bridges, "Daily Newspaper Managing Editors' Perceptions of News Media Function," *Journalism Quarterly* 68 (1991): 719-728; also see Jian-Hua Zhu, "Recent Trends in Adversarial Attitudes Among American Journalists: A Cohort Analysis," *Journalism Quarterly* 68 (1990): 992-1004.
18. David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, *The American Journalist: A Portrait of U.S. News People and Their Work*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana Univerity, 1991).
19. Ibid., 117.
20. Ibid., 115.
21. David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, "Daily Newspaper Journalists in the 1990s" *Newspaper Research Journal* 15 (1994): 2-21.

> One clear impression emerges from this survey of more than 175 years of press reaction to various freedom of expression issues in the United States. It is that, *except when their own freedom was discernibly at stake*, established general circulation newspapers have tended to go along with efforts to suppress deviations from the prevailing political and social orthodoxies of their time and place rather than to support the right to dissent.[22] (emphasis added)

Expectations

In an effort to find out how — or if — four newspapers used their own editorials to describe their rights or responsibilities at significant times in recent American history, expectations were:

1) That the chosen publications would place more emphasis on the watchdog function during the 1970s, and more emphasis on other roles in earlier and later decades;

2) That each publication would place more emphasis on the watchdog function when a president it did not endorse was in office;

3) That each publication's emphasis on the watchdog function would change following an event with First Amendment connotations.

Primary sources for the study were four metropolitan newspapers: *Chicago Tribune*, *Atlanta Constitution*, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* and *(Portland) Oregonian*, chosen for both geographic and political variety. The *Chicago Tribune* is a traditionally Republican newspaper in a traditionally Democrat city and the *Atlanta Constitution* is a traditionally liberal newspaper in a conservative city. Although both are located in the Pacific Northwest, the *Post-Intelligencer* is viewed as liberal and the *Oregonian* as conservative, meaning both reflect the views of most of their readers. What would likely be considered more elite newspapers, such as the *New York Times* and the *Miami Herald*, were intentionally left out for two reasons. First, it was suspected that those newspapers would be more likely to carry First Amendment editorials simply because they were more likely to be directly involved in the legal cases discussed in this paper. Second, the mere fact that journalists and academics seem to consider those publications to be elites makes them atypical; most Americans do not read those publications — nor have most ever done so — even if professors of journalism and political science think everyone should.

For the four newspaper studied, more than 30,000 editorials were read. All of those discussing press roles or responsibilities, or the rights of government in dealing with press-related issues, were analyzed. Seven one-year time periods were covered.[23]

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22. John Lofton, *The Press as Guardian of the First Amendment* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1980).

23. The exceptions were *Atlanta Constitution* Sunday newspapers published during the first two periods. Excluding Sundays still left more than 1,250 *Constitution* editorials for

Editorials were studied because they essentially by definition reflect the values and beliefs of the newspaper's management.[24] And in a study referred to earlier, Hynds found that most editors believe they influence their readers through their editorials.[25] The seven time periods considered were as follows.

Period 1: 22 April 1962 - 22 April 1963, six months before and after the Cuban missile crisis began. Civil rights issues were also a concern throughout the first two periods studied, which could have provided newspapers a reason to express First Amendment concerns.

Period 2: 9 September 1963 - 9 September 1964, six months before and after the Supreme Court's *New York Times v. Sullivan* decision. That ruling was one that Blasi said the court interpreted incorrectly by considering the marketplace function instead of watchdog values, giving the press a chance to discuss either one.

Period 3: 30 December 1970 - 30 December 1971, six months before and after the *New York Times v. United States* Pentagon Papers ruling.[26] At the beginning of what might be considered the "watchdog decade," the case was a significant press-government showdown.

Period 4: 9 February 1974 - 9 February 1975, six months before and after President Richard Nixon's resignation. Even today Watergate remains a symbol for both investigative journalism and government wrongdoing. The revelations of the press helped drive Nixon from office, despite the fact that most American newspapers — including all four in this study — had endorsed him in 1972 for a second term as president. Another key press decision came in this same period, in *Miami Herald v. Tornillo*.[27]

Period 5: 9 September 1978 - 9 September 1979, six months before and after *The Progressive* magazine's H-bomb article was blocked by a federal judge. The period was chosen because it came near the end of the 1970s, and the hydrogen-bomb story issue caused the press a great deal of concern. Two additional factors that drew press attention during the period were the jailing of *New York Times* reporter Myron Farber, who refused to name a confidential source, and a Supreme Court decision that a libel suit defendant could be legally required to reveal the state of mind he or she was working under while producing a story.

Period 6: 25 April 1983 - 25 April 1984, six months before and after U.S. troops invaded Grenada. The invasion, and the exclusion of the press from covering it, prompted considerable discussion of press rights and responsibilities.

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each period, more than were offered during some complete years by two other newspapers in the study.

24. John B. Oakes, "The Editorial: What It Is and What It Aims For," in *Social Responsibility of the Newspress* (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 1962), 23.

25. Hynds, "Editorials, Opinion Pages."

26. 713 U.S. 403 (1971).

27. *Miami Herald Publishing Co. v. Tornillo,* 418 U.S. 241 (1974). The Supreme Court ruled newspapers have no obligation to print replies of those they criticize.

Period 7: All of 1991. The fact that this year marked the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Bill of Rights made it worthy of prompting editors to remind readers of press rights, and why those rights exist. The Gulf War took place in the same year.

For periods 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6, the six-month period preceding each main event served as a sort of check for how the press might refer to its responsibilities and First Amendment issues during non-crisis periods. In period 4, Watergate was a news issue for more than two years, so choosing a single date on which to focus was less precise than with other issues.[28] Because Watergate is commonly recognized as a key event in modern press-government relations, however, any study of this sort failing to include part of that period would obviously be lacking. With Period 7, the year of the 200th anniversary of the Bill of Rights seemed likely to prompt more First Amendment discussion than other years. In addition, the occurrence of the Gulf War, during which the media faced many restrictions, also contributed to discussion of First Amendment issues.[29]

With the periods selected, both Democratic and Republican presidential administrations are represented, and at least one of the newspapers in the study opposed each of those presidents in a bid for election. (the *Atlanta Constitution* joined the other three in endorsing Nixon in 1972, but opposed him in 1960 and 1968.) The periods under consideration included three from the 1970s, two from before that decade, and two from after it.

All four newspapers were reviewed for each of the time periods, so possible differences among newspapers, as well as from year to year, could be noted. These questions were considered: First, was a primary role for the media implicitly stated, and, if so, what was that role? Were other responsibilities considered, either of less or equal importance? Were roles strongly implied, through discussion of the rights of the press, the right of government to censor certain materials, or other ideas? Key words and phrases looked for included "press freedom," "marketplace of ideas," "suppression of information," "press responsibility," and others that became apparent through the research — but the intent was to make interpretations supported by the editorials, while recognizing that an editorial tone or overall theme may speak more directly and clearly than specific coded words. Recognizing, too, that other researchers might conceivably make different interpretations, an effort was made to include examples where differences might occur.

Another type of editorial considered was that in which the newspaper essentially compliments itself for uncovering or publicizing information. While these self-congratulatory pieces, often references to investigative reporting, might be seen as supporting a watchdog function, they could also logically fall in the areas of simply providing information, self-promotion, or, sometimes, serving a marketplace function of presenting alternative views to prompt debate.

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28. Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, *The Final Days* (New York: Avon Books, 1976), 510-514.

29. Lee and Solomon, *Unreliable Sources*, xv-xxiii.

All four of the newspapers studied did use that type of editorial, and seemed to do so for varying reasons. In the interest of consistency, those editorials were not classified as First Amendment editorials unless they also addressed the newspaper's role or responsibility more specifically.

Each editorial was categorized according to whether:

It primarily supported or promoted the watchdog function of the press;

It primarily supported or promoted some other function of the press, such as the marketplace of ideas (these other functions, when found, were noted);

It primarily supported or promoted the right of the government to withhold information from the press or public, or otherwise curb the media;

It primarily supported or promoted press freedom without a clear explanation of why that freedom was important.

Any editorial that did not obviously fit into a designated category was not included in any category.

Findings

Editorial writers typically used the First Amendment as a means of self-defense, rarely taking a proactive, rather than a reactive, stance on press issues; one might compare the First Amendment to a cross worn beneath a tunic, occasionally held up to stave off a government vampire, then again hidden away when the danger was past. In fact, the newspapers studied were somewhat lackadaisical about supporting the First Amendment, and, if they appeared at all, editorials were most likely to support a free press without using either watchdog or marketplace arguments to clearly tell readers why such a right or need should exist (numerical breakdowns are at the end of the text). "This freedom, indispensable to good journalism, is equally indispensable to every citizen, of whatever nation, who detests tyranny and values liberty," the *Chicago Tribune* proclaimed typically in 1962.[30] Almost thirty years later, the *Oregonian* offered no reason for its statement that "(the newspaper) and this community have a profound interest in seeing that individuals with a special knowledge of a subject can write — write boldly — on important public policy questions without fear of reprisal."[31]

Of the First Amendment press rights or responsibilities infrequently referred to by editorial writers, the watchdog function was the one most often cited. The marketplace idea was almost entirely ignored; only five references to this press role were found in the seven years reviewed. The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* offered perhaps the strongest, in a self-congratulatory 1983 National Newspaper Week editorial:

> Our forefathers knew that the press, being manned by human beings, would be fallible — that we'd sometimes get things

30. "Freedom of the Press," *Chicago Tribune*, 7 June 1962.
31. "Troubling Taxi-Cab Termination," *Portland Oregonian*, 15 March 1964.

> woefully wrong. But they had faith that the unfettered pursuit of truth and the free competition of ideas were essential to a democracy, and that the public ultimately could sort out the substance from the smoke and make choices we could live with. Experience has justified that faith.[32]

Despite what Blasi had to say about the Supreme Court's interpretation of *New York Times v. Sullivan,* editorial writers had no trouble ignoring those marketplace considerations, instead choosing to recognize the Court's opinion as a validation of the press watchdog role. "The U.S. Supreme Court has significantly fortified the role of the press as the public's watchdog against official incompetence and misconduct," began an *Oregonian* editorial.[33] "Without the ceaseless vigilance of independent watchdogs, without the right to criticize, expose and admonish, no free press is worthy of the name," stated the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer.*[34] All four papers editorialized about the case, with only the *Atlanta Constitution* failing to express a clear pro-watchdog opinion. The *Constitution*, in what came closest to implying a marketplace responsibility, wrote that the case "spells out the duties of the press, in fact, to inform the people and to promote full discussion of public affairs and public officials."[35] The editorial stopped short of saying the press should provide a forum for that "discussion."

Still, newspapers did not regularly promote their watchdog role, either. They were much more likely to say the press has, or should have, certain First Amendment rights without telling readers why those rights do or should exist. Along with rights, other perceived newspaper responsibilities were mentioned, though few referred to the First Amendment. The most common of these secondary press roles was simply some version of "reporting the news," "printing facts," or "telling the truth."

Only in the second period, with *New York Times v. Sullivan,* did it appear that a press-government conflict stirred writers from an extended editorial silence about First Amendment issues. An individual case or conflict typically provided only a short-term excuse to run a single free press editorial, rather than a long-term inspiration to print such editorials regularly.

Of the original three expectations, the research essentially supported two. First, boosted by the Pentagon Papers case, the press did editorialize more often about the watchdog function, and its rights in general, in the 1970s than in earlier or later periods. But that was apparently true mostly because more conflicts between the press and government arose during the 1970s; editorial writers had more to respond to. Further evidence is seen in the fact that the periods with the most free press editorials also had the most editorials supporting press curbs or government secrecy. Those press-government clashes have

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32. "Newspaper Week," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 9 October 1983.
33. "Echo of Zenger Case," *Portland Oregonian,* 15 March 1964.
34. "A Free Press," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* 14 March 1964.
35. "Intimidation of the Press Dealt a Blow," *Atlanta Constitution,* 11 March 1964.

obviously helped define First Amendment freedoms and the press-government relationship.

The editorials of the early 1960s indicated that editorial writers did not need either *New York Times v. Sullivan* or Watergate to prompt them to at least occasionally tell their readers that the press was keeping an eye on government. But the newspapers did stress that watchdog function noticeably less frequently *after* the 1970s — especially the *Chicago Tribune*, which offered just one such editorial in the last two periods. That one dealt with the invasion of Grenada, and an apparent public backlash by the public against the press. The incident prompted the *Oregonian* and the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* to offer obvious pro-watchdog editorials about three weeks apart.[36] But the *Tribune* was most eloquent, saying in part:

> The last few weeks have brought a jolting revelation to many people in the news media... much of the public has made it clear that it would like to see the press at least partially muzzled... All this is a shock for journalists who have always thought that by keeping an eye on government they were doing a necessary and generally appreciated public service... You wonder whether readers and viewers have decided they don't *want* an independent press; whether all those centuries-old traditions about press freedom were merely journalists talking to themselves... The news media seem to be doing something gravely wrong.[37]

Despite that editorial, newspaper journalists — especially at the *Chicago Tribune*, which failed to offer another watchdog editorial in the last two time periods — apparently continued to talk more to themselves than to their readers about the First Amendment. In the case of the *Tribune*, that might have been at least partly because Republicans were in the White House, but, overall, support for the second expectation — that each newspaper would place more emphasis on the watchdog function when a president it did not endorse was in office — was inconclusive. The biggest concentration of watchdog editorials came when Nixon was in his second term, though all four of the newspapers had endorsed Nixon. Of course, that was also the Watergate period. The lowest number came during Period 6, when Reagan was in his first term. The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, which did not endorse Reagan, ran two watchdog editorials during that period, compared to one for each of the other three newspapers. But in the final period, while the *Chicago Tribune* did not run any watchdog editorials, the *Atlanta Constitution* and the *Oregonian* each ran three; like the *Tribune*, both of those papers had endorsed Bush. Perhaps the most notable case was in the first period, when the *Tribune*, a Nixon supporter that promoted itself

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36. "Press Needs Public Support," *Portland Oregonian*, 21 December 1983; "Grenada Blackout Stirs Press Stand," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 12 January 1984.
37. "The Press Gets a Bad Press" *Chicago Tribune*, 11 December 1983.

as a Republican newspaper, ran six watchdog editorials, compared to one by the *Atlanta Constitution*, the only newspaper of the four to endorse Kennedy. Oddly, however, though the *Tribune* frequently condemned Kennedy and his administration in other editorials, none of the six watchdog editorials mentioned him by name.

As noted, the highest number of editorials promoting press curbs or secrecy appeared during Period 4 — which also had the highest number of watchdog editorials. Each of the newspapers contributed, with the most coming from the *Oregonian*, which of the four newspapers defended Nixon for the longest time. "If ever there was a case in which the climate of justice was poisoned before the trial of the accused, Watergate is that case," one editorial concluded.[38] Almost all of the "pro-secrecy" editorials in the study involved cases of "national security," with some disconcertingly vague on particulars. One example is the following from the *Chicago Tribune*, just twenty days after Nixon's resignation:

> As in so many public affairs, it is impossible to draw an indelible line defining where secrecy is justified and where it isn't. The surest guarantee that the right decisions will be made lies in the quality of the men who make them. A power that might be tolerated in a good man could be intolerable in a bad man.[39]

Less surprising was that Period 5, with its discussion of the *Progressive* and its hydrogen-bomb story, also prompted a number of editorials that might be seen as promoting curbs on press freedom. The *Chicago Tribune* urged the Supreme Court not to "stretch freedom to the point of suicide."[40] And a writer for the *Atlanta Constitution* apparently saw no irony in the argument that the case "could result in still further curtailment of the freedom of the press — a freedom without which a democratic society cannot exist."[41] That editorial came only eight days after a *Constitution* editorial had warned, "Stories keep turning up in the papers about... matters in which the government either lied to us, misled us, or was itself ignorant and didn't see fit to warn us that it was."[42] Perhaps because of those "matters" editorial writers for the four newspapers did change their views over time, becoming less likely to actively promote secrecy because of national security concerns in the later periods.

The strongest support came for the third of the three original expectations, that each publication's emphasis on the watchdog function would change following an event with First Amendment connotations. In fact, First Amendment editorials were almost always prompted by events; almost no

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38. "Poisoning the Well," *Portland Oregonian*, 19 February 1974.
39. "Secrecy and Responsibility," *Chicago Tribune*, 19 August 1974.
40. "The Free Press and the Bomb," *Chicago Tribune*, 16 March 1979.
41. "On Defending Stupidity,"*Atlanta Constitution*, 13 March 1979.
42. "Trusting Government," *Atlanta Constitution*, 5 March 1979.

editorials supporting press freedom were run proactively. The number of those found throughout the study that were not obviously written in response to events such as government action, activities of other members of the media, or National Newspaper Week could be counted on one hand.

The use of six-month check periods before and after designated "crises" turned out to be fairly meaningless; events occurring during those periods prompted editorial reaction, and even reaction to the biggest crisis typically lasted no more than a day or two.

Events appeared to play a bigger role than party politics, and newspapers usually put their common concerns over those of individual administrations they had endorsed. They split dramatically only in the case of the *Progressive*, a case that involved both a perceived threat to national security and an atypical member of the press. In other incidents, the newspapers not surprisingly generally favored what would be viewed as the press side over the government side. The H-bomb case also indicates that even members of the press may sometimes have trouble deciding who or what is included in the "press," and therefore deserving of First Amendment protection.

Part of the reason 1991 was selected as a study year was because it was the 200th anniversary of the ratification of the Bill of Rights. That seemed to be a likely occasion for editors to define First Amendment issues, remind readers of the importance of a free press, and discuss the rights and/or responsibilities of those involved. Yet not one editorial was found that addressed specific press roles while referring to the Bill of Rights. In fact, the few editorials that noted the Bill of Rights barely mentioned the press. Those included a series of eight editorials run by the *Atlanta Constitution.* The first barely touched on free expression, while the second discussed the First Amendment — without mentioning the press. The other six, dealing with other amendments, also ignored the press.[43]

Newspapers did carry occasional editorials supporting First Amendment freedoms, including, infrequently, their own. And just how many editorials might have been enough to improve public opinion of the press cannot be determined, because that opinion is influenced by a multitude of factors. Editorials alone would probably not have been enough. But a more important consideration than numbers is timing. While the papers studied responded to individual incidents that could affect their own interests, noticeably absent were editorials without an obvious hook, run simply to support the idea of a free press.

That apparent unwillingness on the part of the press to take a proactive stance on First Amendment issues might be part of the reason, if Blasi is correct, that the Supreme Court and the press have followed separate First Amendment paths.

The question of whether an editorial on any subject is likely to appear without a news hook is worthy of more study. Editorial writers may have

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43. "Celebrate the Bill of Rights," *Atlanta Constitution,* 8 December 1991; "Free Religion and Speech in Retreat," *Atlanta Constitution,* 9 December 1991.

simply worked and thought on day-to-day terms, reacting to the news. But the press is in a unique position when it speaks about itself. And, unfortunately, when they respond to threats, newspapers may find themselves in the same position as the accused criminals they often feature on their pages. They may be innocent of wrongdoing, but the fact that they are accused automatically makes them less credible in many readers' minds. Those editors who are reluctant to argue their case without a clear news event on which to hang it need only look to the example set by the *Chicago Tribune* in the early periods of this study. *Tribune* editorial writers managed to turn a number of only distantly related topics into First Amendment hooks in those years, repeating two main themes — that the paper would "stand as a watchman on the wall," and that it would work "to furnish that check upon government which no constitution has been able to provide." The latter phrase was part of a slogan that appeared at the top of the *Tribune* editorial page each day.

In those years, the paper was obviously working to uncover corruption in local government, and when it found some, it used its editorials to boast — and at the same time, remind readers of why it was doing so. A reporter for a small Texas newspaper was also commended in a *Tribune* editorial for uncovering a scandal; that editorial concluded with the same "check upon government" line that was at the top of the page.[44] Speeches by government officials about the press and actions by judges also sometimes provided hooks used by the *Tribune* but ignored by the other three newspapers. The *Tribune*, too, later stopped preaching to its daily flock about the First Amendment gospel — at least the part concerning why the press is what it is, and why it does what it does.

There is also another issue to consider — the idea that editors have thought about the First Amendment, but have been reluctant to discuss it because of what it might imply. As demonstrated by *Miami Herald v. Tornillo*, and the editorial reaction to the case, members of the press have not liked the idea of being told what to print. Intentionally or otherwise, they have seemed to agree with Timothy Gleason in his discussion of the watchdog concept, that, "The right to freedom of the press is an individual right"[45] — at least in their case; as noted previously some members of the press seemed unwilling to grant that same right to *The Progressive*. That individualist stance opposes the view commonly held by contemporary communitarians, that First Amendment protections exist at least partly so that the press can fulfill a societal responsibility.[46]

It might also be the case that First Amendment *editorials* have decreased over time, but watchdog or pro-marketplace *activities* have not. In other words, the press may have been doing a job it considered important, but

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44. "The Man Who Unveiled the Estes Scandal," *Chicago Tribune*, 17 May 1962.
45. Timothy W. Gleason, *The Watchdog Concept: The Press and the Courts in Nineteenth-Century America* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University: 1990), 7.
46. Jeffrey Abramson and Elizabeth Bussiere, "Free speech and free press: A communitarian perspective," *Responsive Community* (1994): 22-32.

failing to tell its readers why it was doing so. Editorials provide far from the only means of passing along that message, of course, and perhaps some newspapers used other means. Still, the "jolting revelation" that stung the *Chicago Tribune* and others after the invasion of Grenada — the revelation that much of the public would prefer a "partially muzzled" press — indicates that any means used to illustrate the value of a free press were inadequate at best.

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NUMERICAL BREAKDOWNS

EDITORIALS PROMOTING "FREE PRESS" FOR NO SPECIFIC REASON

Period:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Atlanta Constitution	5	2	2	5	7	3	1
Chicago Tribune	5	3	6	4	8	4	8
Portland Oregonian	5	2	5	4	8	4	3
Seattle Post-Intelligencer	1	2	7	0	10	3	1
Totals:	16	9	20	13	33	14	13

NUMBER OF "WATCHDOG" EDITORIALS PER PERIOD

Period:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Atlanta Constitution	1	0	2	2	1	1	3
Chicago Tribune	6	5	7	7	2	1	0
Portland Oregonian	2	2	3	4	2	1	3
Seattle Post-Intelligencer	0	4	2	3	5	2	2
Totals:	9	11	14	16	10	5	8

EDITORIALS PRIMARILY SUPPORTING PRESS CURBS/SECRECY

Period:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Atlanta Constitution	2	0	1	3	4	2	0
Chicago Tribune	2	1	0	1	3	1	2
Portland Oregonian	1	3	3	4	1	0	2
Seattle Post-Intelligencer	2	1	2	2	0	0	0
Totals:	7	5	6	10	8	3	4

EDITORIALS PRIMARILY SUPPORTING "REPORTING NEWS"

Period:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Atlanta Constitution	2	1	0	0	2	0	0
Chicago Tribune	1	4	2	0	1	1	0
Portland Oregonian	2	1	1	4	2	0	1
Seattle Post-Intelligencer	1	0	0	1	1	1	0
Totals:	6	6	3	5	6	2	1

AMERICAN JOURNALISM HISTORIANS ASSOCIATION

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The AJHA Doctoral Dissertation Award, which will be given for the first time in 1997, is awarded annually for the best doctoral dissertation dealing with mass communication history. A cash award of $300 will accompany the prize.

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To be considered, nomination packets must include: (a) one copy of the complete dissertation, (b) four copies of either a single chapter from the dissertation or a research paper written from it [not to exceed 50 manuscript pages, not including title page, notes, charts or photographs], (c) a letter of nomination from the dissertation chair/director or the chair of the university department in which the dissertation was written, and (d) a cover letter from the nominee indicating a willingness, should the dissertation be selected for a prize, both to attend the awarding ceremony and to deliver a public presentation based on the dissertation at the 1997 American Journalism Historians Association Annual Convention on October 17, 1997, in Mobile, Alabama.

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'Typical Slime By Joe McCarthy': Ralph McGill and Anti-McCarthyism in the South

By Karen S. Miller

The Atlanta Constitution's *Ralph McGill regularly attacked Joseph McCarthy and McCarthyism. Southerners were less supportive of McCarthy than other Americans, some because they feared McCarthy might undermine the powerful position of Southern senators. McGill opposed him because the editor, who used the newspaper to fight communism, believed McCarthyism helped the communist cause.*

Best known for his liberalism and active support for racial equality, Ralph McGill, editor of the *Atlanta Constitution* during the 1950s, also regularly attacked Senator Joseph R. McCarthy Jr. and McCarthyism. Although the response of the press to McCarthy has been well documented, little has been written about McCarthy and anti-McCarthyism in the South. In fact, in criticizing the senator, McGill was no voice in the wilderness; while Southerners in general were strongly anticommunist, the South was less supportive of McCarthy than other regions of the United States.

An analysis of McGill's attitudes and actions in the context of the region enriches understanding of McCarthyism and the Red Scare in two ways. The complex response that Southern citizens, politicians, and one editor had to McCarthy indicates that meaningful regional differences in response to the senator did exist — differences partly tied to race relations. Southerners opposed communism for a number of different reasons. Among some white Southerners the most important reason was their desire to protect segregation. This strongly influenced the area's reaction to the junior senator from Wisconsin. Second, this article illustrates the extent to which anticommunist thought pervaded society in general and the news media in particular, affecting even a journalist considered as

liberal as McGill. Indeed, despite his public dismay over McCarthy's lack of evidence and attack on institutions the editor considered important to national security and quality of life, McGill shared in and even contributed to the anticommunist consensus. McGill despised both McCarthy's extremist means *and* Communism, a stand many in the McCarthy era could neither understand nor tolerate. McGill feared that McCarthy was actually helping the communist cause, which McGill fought with every tool available. His philosophy is best summarized by a 1954 *Saturday Evening Post* editorial titled "Deplore McCarthyism But Keep an Eye on the Reds."[1]

Opinions Toward McCarthy in the South

Communist Southerners, particularly blacks, opposed McCarthy for obvious reasons. "Jim Crow had in effect pushed blacks to the Left," according to the biographer of Ben Davis, a leading black Communist. Particularly before the Red Scare and McCarthyism, "atrocious racist attitudes, combined with horrible economic conditions, facilitated Communist inroads within the African-American community" throughout the United States.[2] These blacks, along with white Southern communists, recognized the threat that McCarthy posed to their cause and later remembered the Wisconsin senator's activities as momentous in their own lives. Hosea Hudson, a black Communist from Birmingham, Alabama, began his life narrative by writing "a few words" about the party "as I knew it, from Sept. 8th. in 1931 untell [sic] the year of Joe McCarthy, in the early 1950s."[3]

However, most Southerners, like most Americans, opposed communism in any form. Obviously not all blacks were Communists or even liberals, and many black leaders and citizens from the South and across the nation opposed communism. George Schuyler, the "godfather of black conservatives," an influential writer and former business manager of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, publicly supported Joe McCarthy. Local chapters of the NAACP, like many other prestigious liberal organizations, tried to silence conservative critics by organizing "a not-very-efficient intelligence network," which compiled dossiers on Communist activists, and using the information to screen applicants; the national office circulated lists of Communist front organizations to local affiliates. As in other regions, some Southern city councils such as those in Birmingham, Alabama,

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1. Edwin R. Bayley, *Joe McCarthy and the Press* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 8; "Deplore McCarthyism But Keep an Eye on the Reds!" *Saturday Evening Post,* 17 April 1954, 10.
2. Gerald Horne, *Black Liberation/Red Scare: Ben Davis and the Communist Party* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994), 45.
3. Nell Irvin Painter, *The Narrative of Hosea Hudson: His Life as a Negro Communist in the South* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 37.

and Macon, Georgia, adopted loyalty programs and tried to force Communists and their associates to leave town.[4]

Despite this anticommunist consensus, which apparently crossed racial lines, Southerners did not generally support Joe McCarthy. Southern anti-Communists opposed the senator for several reasons. Some, particularly the political elite, feared that his actions might undermine the powerful positions that Southerners held in the Senate. Others, who were concerned about racial tension and segregation, ignored him. Some opposed him because of his background and personality, and a few, like McGill, saw him as a threat to American ideals and institutions.

Southerners as a group apparently did not spend a great deal of time worrying about Senator McCarthy. Opinion polls — broken down by region but not race or gender — show that they disliked the senator and his antics, with the South consistently ranking toward the top among regions disapproving of him. Perhaps more importantly, they just as consistently had the highest, or occasionally second highest, "no opinion" response to survey questions about McCarthy. The Southern press covered him less extensively than the press in other areas, even during his assault on the Army and his Senate censure. McCarthy lacked credibility in the eyes of many Southerners because he was Irish-Catholic, Northern, and Republican.[5] In short, many in the South simply ignored him.

Southern political elites, while not as indifferent toward McCarthy as many of their constituents, remained silent throughout most of his five-year reign. A study of the response of the senators gives insight into the feelings of many Southerners, because the conservative Democrats reacted to McCarthy in the manner which would best protect their own positions in the Senate and especially among their constituents, reflecting the opinions of many white Southern voters. Some scholars have located McCarthy's power not in the press but in the Senate. As one critic has said, "What gave McCarthy his newsworthiness was the willingness of other Washington leaders to accord him importance."[6] McCarthy could not remain in power without, at the very least, the passive support of powerful members of the Senate, a group which included several Southerners.

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4. Horne, 32; Kenneth O'Reilly, *Hoover and the Un-Americans* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), 172-3; Richard Fried, *Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 114.

5. See, for instance, *Gallup Poll Reports*, vol. 2 1948-1965 (Princeton, N.J.: American Institute of Public Opinion, 1969), 1201-2, 1220-1, 1237, and 1277-8. The West was also indifferent toward McCarthy but tended to register greater disapproval than the South; see 1232 and 1247; Bayley, 209-10; Alfred O. Hero, Jr., *The Southerner and World Affairs* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), 428.

6. Nelson W. Polsby, "Down Memory Lane with Joe McCarthy," *Commentary* (February 1983): 57-8.

Southern senators tried to avoid a confrontation with McCarthy for a number of reasons, the most important of which was segregation. According to historian C. Vann Woodward, they could understand and even tolerate a degree of demagoguery because of their own rich history of demagogues. Additionally, because their constituents were apathetic about McCarthyism, it would have been quixotic for powerful Southern Democrats to risk careers on a losing battle. Democrats feared that if one of their own attacked McCarthy, the Republicans might rally around the party banner against the common enemy. Further, Senate Rule XIX stated that "no senator shall speak disparagingly of another," and nearly everyone respected the rules and traditions of the Senate — except McCarthy. Southern Democrats were willing to put up with McCarthy if only because they were not interested in discussions on civil liberties or "character assassination."[7] But the most important issue in the politics of the conservative South was the institution of segregation, which by the early 1950s was clearly in trouble. State legislatures posed no threat to segregation, but the federal government did, meaning that Southerners who favored segregation depended upon their senators to block any legislation that might endanger it.

These conservatives had a long history of using their power in Congress to stop civil rights legislation. V. O. Key wrote in 1949 that "the fundamental explanation of Southern politics is that the black-belt whites [those living in areas where blacks were the majority] succeeded in imposing their will on their states and thereby presented a solid regional front in national politics on the race issue." Southern politics were based on white supremacy, and Northern Democrats agreed to give the South local autonomy in racial matters in return for Democratic votes. This marriage of convenience began to break up, however, as early as the New Deal era. Public opinion polls showed that Southerners liked Roosevelt's programs but feared federal intrusion. They were apprehensive that intervention might help blacks more than whites, upsetting the balance of power. When Northern blacks shifted to the Democratic Party in support of FDR, the party could no longer ignore the race issue.[8]

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7. C. Vann Woodward, *The Burden of Southern History*, rev. ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), 115; Richard M. Fried, *Men Against McCarthy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 184-5; Robert Griffith, *The Politics of Fear: Joseph R. McCarthy and the Senate* (Lexington: Organization of American Historians, University Press of Kentucky, 1970), 206.

8. V. O. Key, Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), 11; Alexander Heard, "A Two-Party South," in *The American South Comes of Age*, ed. Jack Bass and Thomas E. Terrill (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 238; Hodding Carter, "A Two-Party System in Dixie?" *The Reporter*, 28 March 1950, 8; Alan Brinkley, "The New Deal and Southern Politics," in *The New Deal and the South*, ed. James C. Cobb and Michael B. Namorato (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1984), 107, 114-5; Morton Sosna, *In Search of the Silent South: Southern Liberals and the Race Issue* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 73.

Over the years the liberal-conservative schism within the Democratic Party continued to widen, especially on issues of race, until many Southerners were more closely tied to conservative Republicans than to their own party. President Truman's proposed civil rights program triggered the 1948 revolt of the Dixiecrats, a move that symbolized their slowly growing dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party. As McGill wrote in the *Saturday Evening Post,* "President Truman blew the leadership of the Southern Democrats into the air with his February message to Congress in which he recommended specific civil-rights legislation."[9] McGill correctly predicted that the Southern Democrats would go all out to block Truman's nomination but that if he won it, a majority would, in the end, vote for him. Thus, although most Southerners voted for Truman, by the time McCarthy became a prominent figure in 1950, their senators had little desire to seek an open confrontation with McCarthy and his supporters on the president's behalf. McGill recognized their dilemma. He "mourned the 'really able men' the South had sent to Congress where they could never hope to attain 'the national respect and stature for which they were so admirable equipped,' " because in order to survive politically they "were required to conform to the mores of their states," a former *Constitution* editor said, quoting McGill.[10]

For these reasons, C. Vann Woodward concluded that in rejecting McCarthyism, Southerners were " 'right' for all the 'wrong' reasons." At least one scholar has suggested that the South might have been a much stronger advocate of McCarthy if he had attacked the government after the 1954 Supreme Court decision banning segregation. Certainly his "charges of communism in high places in government and private institutions" would have been taken more seriously.[11] It is not difficult to imagine many Southerners applauding the tactics of McCarthyism being applied to those who worked to end segregation, because integration and Communism were so often seen as the same problem. In fact, although "once blasé, Southern state legislatures awoke to the Red menace," according to one historian. "After *Brown* [*v. Topeka Board of Education*], they established variously named state commissions that often espied Communist conspiracy behind civil-rights agitation."[12]

McGill, Communism, and McCarthy

One of the South's most respected sons was also an ardent anticommunist. Largely because of Ralph McGill, the *Atlanta Constitution* is often regarded as the best Southern paper of the midtwentieth century. Born and

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9. Fried, *Men Against McCarthy,* 184; Ralph McGill, "Will the South Ditch Truman?" *Saturday Evening Post,* 22 May 1948, 15.
10. Eugene Patterson, *Ralph McGill: Rock in a Weary Land,* Ralph McGill Lecture, 1 November 1979 (Athens, Ga.: Henry W. Grady School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Georgia, 1979), 11.
11. Woodward, 115; Richard Fried, *Nightmare in Red,* 175.
12. Hero, 428.

raised in Tennessee, McGill went to the *Constitution* as a sports editor, but by the McCarthy era he was a well-known columnist and editor, and he eventually became a spokesman for the South. "It is hard to overestimate McGill's importance," one critic has said. "...[H]e was the South's leading journalist."[13] According to the popular myth surrounding McGill, his perspective was based on tolerance and understanding. "What he wanted for Atlanta and Georgia and for the whole of mankind," one journalist said upon his death, "was a decent respect one for another, an equal chance and a fair shake...."[14] But this open-mindedness did not extend to Communists.

Like other Southern anti-Communists, McGill never questioned the necessity of ridding the country of Communist influence or of red-baiting as an appropriate technique to reach that end. Instead, he embraced what the historian Kenneth O'Reilly has called "'responsible' red-baiting," "condemning the McCarthyite style" while adopting "a politics of anticommunism." In other words, liberals shared in the anticommunist consensus. O'Reilly explains that liberals did not object to red-baiting, only to "indiscriminate and irresponsible" red-baiting, an apt description of McGill's outlook.[15]

McGill's *Saturday Evening Post* coverage of the 1950 Senate contest between Florida's liberal incumbent Claude Pepper and the energetic, young George Smathers is an example of the editor's acceptance of red-baiting as a legitimate technique. Smathers baited Pepper, quoting him as saying, among other things, "Generalissimo Stalin is a man who keeps his promises."[16] McGill apparently did not consider Smathers' actions dangerous to civil liberties. When a reader wrote to complain that the story was too pro-Smathers, McGill responded that "it was just a professional job with me, and I really have no great interest in it, except that I did find Smathers pleasant, frank and ambitious."[17] Throughout the election, McGill never publicly criticized Smathers' red-baiting, nor did he criticize its use by other leaders. In short, McGill made a distinction between the responsible — even necessary — red-baiting of most anticommunists and the capricious and unjust tactics employed by Joe McCarthy.

Like many other Southerners, McGill opposed McCarthy — although for different reasons. McGill's syndicated daily column, running first on the editorial page and by mid-1950 on the left column of the front page of the *Constitution*, attacked the senator literally dozens of times during his five years

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13. Arthur Cooper, "Southern Conscience," *Newsweek*, 25 June 1973, 90.
14. Richard L. Tobin, "Passing the Baton," *Saturday Review*, 8 March 1969, 117-8.
15. O'Reilly, 170-1; Fried, *Nightmare in Red*, 36.
16. Ralph McGill, "Can He Purge Senator Pepper?" *Saturday Evening Post*, 22 April 1950, 32.
17. McGill to Malcolm Ross, Ralph McGill Papers, Special Collections, Woodruff Library, Emory University, 6 April 1950, Box 4, Folder 10, hereafter cited as RMP. Smathers linked Pepper's liberalism on race to Communism, and he won the election, but some historians assert the victory is more properly credited to the desegregation issue than to Communism.

in the spotlight, but not because of segregation. The editor had a long history of fighting demagogues, particularly the Talmadges, in Georgia. He had originally accepted separate-but-equal segregation, but by the McCarthy era he regarded desegregation as inevitable and segregation as wrong because while separate, blacks were not equal. He could find no justice in the system.[18]

Instead, McGill's attitudes toward Communism and McCarthyism had been shaped by several experiences. The first was a perhaps strikingly old-fashioned, sentimental respect for the Constitution and the government of the United States. "Perhaps because of my 'raising,' I have had from boyhood-on what amounts to a reverence for the Supreme Court and its place in our life, for the presidency as an office, and the Congress as the voice and representation of the people," he wrote.[19] In response to a letter from a reader, McGill said he believed that McCarthyism was a threat to the institutions that he so revered. "Almost every thoughtful person knows...McCarthy methods are un-American and are doing this country a great deal of harm, but most people try to excuse him," he wrote. "He is quite obviously determined to make President Eisenhower play second fiddle, and if he should succeed, then, indeed, will something be lost to America which will never again return."[20] Growing out of this reverence for the federal government was an intense desire to see it preserved. In 1954 he told a reader, "I propose to stand for the Constitution of this country and its guarantee as long as I can."[21]

McGill's travels also influenced his beliefs. In the late 1930s he heard Hitler speak in Austria, and he later compared McCarthy to Hitler on many occasions. "It was failure to deal with this sort of thing which enabled the minorities of Mussolini, Hitler, Peron, and the Communist leaders to attain power," McGill wrote after McCarthy won reelection in Wisconsin.[22] McGill was blunt. One of his friends wrote that "at a time when some editors were handling Senator McCarthy with the delicacy of a cat poking at a hot coal, McGill wrote 'McCarthy's stuff reads as if it were lifted from *Mein Kampf*.' "[23]

McGill's post-World War II trip to the Soviet Union also made a lasting impression. He and two other journalists traveled for the American Society of Newspaper Editors to promote the American ideal of a free press throughout the world. For the next two years he passionately promoted the cause of peaceful cooperation with Russia because he believed that the Soviet leaders were well intentioned and that their actions were understandable given the

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18. "Ralph McGill Dies; Atlanta Editor, 70," *New York Times*, 4 February 1969, 26; Calvin M. Logue, "Ralph McGill: Convictions of a Southern Editor," *Journalism Quarterly* 45 (autumn 1968): 647-9.
19. Calvin M. Logue, *Ralph McGill, Editor and Publisher*, vol. 1 of *Ralph McGill at Work* (Durham, N.C.: Moore Publishing Co., 1969), 18.
20. McGill to Mrs. Wayne A. Gray, 10 March 1953, Box 5, Folder 5, RMP.
21. McGill to Ray Latson, 17 March 1954, Box 5, Folder 12, RMP.
22. McGill, *Constitution*, 7 November 1952, 1.
23. Harold H. Martin, *Ralph McGill, Reporter* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), 148. McGill quote (not cited in Martin): *Constitution*, 27 November 1953, 1..

terrible hardships of World War II. By mid-1947, when the Soviets had set up satellite regimes in Eastern Europe, McGill had begun to believe that Russia was a ruthless aggressor. His disillusionment made him a strong and outspoken anti-Communist. "All Americans are united against Communism," he later wrote. "Stalin made us that way."[24] Russians could not be trusted, for Communists would do or say anything. "All Communists are liars and perjurers as a matter of record," he concluded in an April 1950 column.[25]

His experiences with Hitler and the Soviet Communists led McGill to believe that extremists on either side were dangerous and morally wrong — McCarthy chief among them. In one of his first columns on McCarthy, titled "Neither Left Nor Right," he wrote, "...quite obviously, if we are to have a climate in which everyone who disagrees as to Chiang Kai-shek or who doesn't go along with 'Jumping Joe' McCarthy is suspected, then we destroy honest disagreement and the meaning of America."[26] In 1953 he reiterated: "Joe McCarthy seeks to make us adopt totalitarian methods to protect us from totalitarian pressures. To preserve freedom he would destroy it."[27]

McGill's animosity toward extremists also shaped his beliefs about the rights of Communists, and his columns hammered away at "the Commies" for years. In addition to the articles, McGill, like other reporters and editors of the time, fought Communism by cooperating with the FBI. He kept a file on Communist suspects, in which he gathered reports on local Communist groups including letters and propaganda sent to him by his readers. He often gave this information to FBI agents in Atlanta. In one instance, a reader whose husband was a soldier stationed in Korea sent McGill some propaganda from the "Christian Anti-Jewish Party" which accused Jewish people of being behind race-mixing and Communism. McGill apparently thought that it was subversive because it attempted to create Army infighting, which would be helpful to the Communist cause. He passed along the information to the FBI with the comment that "if this stuff is being sent to people in the Armed Services it might work out harmfully. I don't know anything that could be done, except it does seem to me the Post Office could ban it."[28] He then mailed a reassuring

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24. Leonard Ray Teel, "Liberalism and the Cold War: Ralph McGill and the Aborted Campaign for U.S.-Soviet Co-Operation" (paper presented at the American Journalism Historians Association National Convention, 1 October 1987, St. Paul Minn.), 1, abstract, and 14; see also, Leonard Ray Teel, "The Shaping of a Southern Opinion Leader: Ralph McGill and Freedom of Information," *American Journalism* 5 (1988): 14-27.

25. McGill to Ray Latson, 17 March 1954, Box 5, Folder 12, RMP; McGill, "The Commies Were Present — Money Hungry," *Constitution*, 17 April 1950, 18.

26. Logue, *Ralph McGill*, vol. 1, 67; McGill, "Neither Left Nor Right," *Constitution*, 28 April 1950, 18.

27. Calvin M. Logue, *Ralph McGill, Editor and Publisher*, vol. 2 of *Ralph McGill Speaks* (Durham, N.C.: Moore Publishing Co., 1969), 40.

28. See, for example, *Constitution*, "The Commies Must Answer Up!" 12 April 1950, 12; "The Commies Are False Advocates," 20 April 1950, 18; McGill to David

letter to the reader about the propaganda's author. "We have had an eye on him for sometime, and he doesn't seem to be getting anywhere," he told her. "We are going to have another check made on him."[29]

During the early 1950s McGill worked actively to drive the Communist Party out of Atlanta. He wrote a column exposing the South's Communist front man, Homer Chase, in July 1950. The article provided Chase's background, including the fact that his mother had been born in Russia and ran for a New Hampshire Senate seat on the Communist ticket, his father's gravestone had a hammer and sickle over the family name, and two of his brothers had married women of Russian parentage. McGill made Chase sound like a bumbling buffoon who was allowed to remain a member of the party only because higher-ups knew they could count on his puppy-like loyalty. McGill exhorted his readers to action: "Like all things that crawl out from behind the woodwork they [Communists] don't like sunlight. All citizens can help keep them in the spotlight of publicity and focus public attention upon them. Our job, as Americans, is to stand steadfast."[30] Apparently his plan worked, because McGill later wrote, "I helped drive out of Atlanta the official Communist organization by a rather thorough job of keeping check on a fellow named Homer Chase who was the Southeastern Communist representative here...."[31] Such actions contributed to the oppressive atmosphere of the early 1950s.

Despite his activities, McGill was often called a Communist himself. At least one reader wrote to McGill saying that "it seems to me to be as inescapable as it is incredible that you are a Communist. I do not mean that I think that you 'carry a card,' I would not know about that[,] but I do mean that you seem to consistently employ every means at your most capable command to promote their declared purposes."[32] Furthermore, an FBI security check on McGill conducted in 1951 revealed that he had traveled to Moscow and that he had once had tenuous connections with two groups it alleged were Communist fronts, the Southern Conference for Human Welfare and the Southern Negro Youth Congress. The report noted, however, that "Mr. McGill has written considerable number of newspaper editorials as well as other articles for many years attacking the Communist party and its policies. He has exhibited a definite anti-Communist attitude in all of these articles;" and that he "has always cooperated with the various agencies of the United States Government in furnishing them any information of value."[33] The editor was given clearance to serve on the Atomic Plant Construction Advisory Panel, but these "blots"

Lawrence, 23 June 1953, Box 5, Folder 7, RMP; see also, 6 April, 17 June, and 30 July 1953, Box 51, Folder 5, RMP; McGill to Paul Slayden, 13 January 1953, Box 5, Folder 5.

29. McGill to Mrs. Miriam Adams, 20 July 1953, Box 5, Folder 5, RMP.
30. McGill, *Constitution*, 11 March 1954, 1.
31. McGill to David Lawrence, 23 June 1953, Box 5, Folder 7, RMP.
32. Martin, 148; McGill to David Lawrence, 23 June 1953, Box 5, Folder 7, RMP; Ray Latson to McGill, 14 March 1954, Box 5, Folder 12, RMP.
33. Box 109 (folder not numbered), RMP.

remained on his record until his death, despite the fact that McGill was later to write "I am a very close friend of J. Edgar Hoover and have just within the past few days had a fine commendation from him."[34]

McGill was distressed to find that an attack on McCarthy automatically made someone vulnerable to the charge of Communism. In a letter to David Lawrence of *U. S. News and World Report,* McGill wrote that he was disturbed by the phrase "anti-Communist Senators" appearing in Lawrence's column.

> The only other conclusion is that you believe there is [sic] in the Senate and Congress pro-Communist senators and congressmen. This I find it [sic] difficult to believe. The column shocked me considerably to think that we must assume that he represents the anti-Communist force and any who do not believe in him must be labeled pro-Communist.[35]

Because he had been accused himself, McGill had reason to empathize with people falsely accused of being Communist sympathizers.

McGill's Politics During the McCarthy Era

McGill's feelings toward McCarthy grew to disgust, even loathing, to the point that it affected his political decision-making and the *Constitution's* coverage of the 1952 presidential campaign. Dwight Eisenhower's reluctance to criticize McCarthy deeply frustrated McGill. The editor admired Eisenhower as general, and he hoped that he would run for president as a Democrat in 1952. When Ike announced his decision to run as a Republican, McGill still considered supporting him, a radical move for the Southern Democrat. But one of the problems McGill had with Eisenhower was his unwillingness to repudiate McCarthy. After McGill heard Ike speak in Milwaukee, he wrote a column expressing his disapproval. Rumor had suggested that Eisenhower planned to undermine McCarthy by expressing his strong support for General Marshall, whom McCarthy had criticized, but Wisconsin Republicans managed to convince the candidate to tone down his remarks. "The Eisenhower speech was a disappointment, as the general fearfully tried to satisfy both the anti-McCarthy and pro-McCarthy camps, and succeeded with neither," McGill wrote in the Atlanta paper.[36] Thoroughly disillusioned, he told a reader, "I guess I am a hero worshiper [sic] at heart and always will be, and it will take me a long time to get over the fact that General Eisenhower felt it expedient to endorse certain persons," including Joe McCarthy.[37]

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34. Report of 10 November 1951; McGill to Ray Latson, 17 March 1954, Box 5, Folder 12, RMP.
35. McGill to David Lawrence, 23 June 1953, Box 5, Folder 7, RMP.
36. McGill, *Constitution*, 10 October 1952, 1.
37. McGill to Ralph Hayes, 7 November 1952, Box 5, Folder 4, RMP.

McGill campaigned strongly on behalf of the general's opponent at least in part because Adlai Stevenson openly criticized McCarthy. McGill wrote several supportive news stories and columns on the campaign, with headlines like "New Orleans Throngs Roar Approval of Fighting Adlai" and "Stevenson Meets the Issues." The latter was a column that noted "this is an ugly thing in America — this McCarthy hysteria."[38] After the election, Stevenson wrote to McGill, "Only in the last few days have I had an opportunity to read some of your columns. That I am blushing is beside the point. I am also profoundly grateful and deeply touched."[39]

McGill still basically admired Eisenhower, however, and after the election he supported the president steadfastly; he corresponded and met with him. "I never for a moment wavered in my respect and admiration for him," McGill wrote after the election. "I was just disappointed, and I never was disappointed in anything Stevenson said or did."[40]

Much to McGill's dismay, Wisconsin voters returned McCarthy to the Senate on Eisenhower's coattails, but soon after the election came allegations by the Army about one of McCarthy's young assistants, allegations which led to the pivotal Army-McCarthy hearings. When the senator attacked the Army, McGill was disconsolate, writing that "the methods of McCarthyism are destroying the Army and our national security and trust for one another...." He wrote several columns on McCarthy's accusations, asking, "Are we to sacrifice the Army, the government, the confidence in our country and one another to this man's power lust?"[41] Yet he did find value in the hearings, because the television network coverage gave many people an opportunity to watch McCarthy's blustering, use of flimsy evidence, and misbehavior first hand. In "The People Now Know Joe!" McGill rejoiced over the damage done to McCarthy during the hearings. "He wasn't the only one hurt, to be sure. The nation itself was damaged. So was the president of the United States. But the people got a look at McCarthy." He later said he believed that this led to the senator's fall.[42]

In fact, the attack on the Army was for many Southerners the proverbial last straw. The military tradition was deeply rooted in the South in part because of the romantic vision of the chivalrous cavalier among those in the upper class

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38. McGill, *Constitution*, 11 October 1952, 1.
39. Adlai E. Stevenson to McGill, 19 November 1952, Box 5, Folder 4, RMP.
40. McGill to Ralph Hayes, 7 November 1952, Box 5, Folder 4, RMP. When Eisenhower finally did repudiate McCarthy, McGill telegraphed in support: "In response to Senator McCarthy's request for telegrams, please accept this one as being on the President's side in this issue and against Senator McCarthy." McGill to the White House, 7 December 1953, Box 5, Folder 9, RMP.
41. Ralph McGill to Ray Latson, 17 March 1954, Box 5, Folder 12, RMP; McGill, *Constitution*, 24 April 1954, 1; see also 23 April 1954, 1.
42. Hero, 78, 96; Fried, *Men Against McCarthy*, 271-2; McGill, *Constitution*, 19 June 1954, 1; "Senator McCarthy's Death Ends Spectacular Career," *Constitution*, 4 May 1957, 4.

and a lack of occupational alternatives in the lower classes. In 1950 about one-third of the generals in the Army and admirals in the Navy were born in the South. Some Southerners, including senators, shifted from passivity to irritability because of McCarthy's actions.[43]

McCarthy's behavior during the Army hearings finally turned many Americans, including his fellow Senate Republicans, against him. Shortly after the following November's election, the Senate voted to censure him, and McCarthy quickly dropped out of the public eye. Scholars attribute McCarthy's downfall to a combination of factors, including increased opposition among the public and the press following the hearings, a conscious press blackout following the censure, and McCarthy's failing health, increased drinking, and personal humiliation following the censure.[44]

But it is important to note that the Senate censured McCarthy, not anti-Communism or red-baiting, for purely "Senatorial" reasons. At least theoretically, "his right to vote, to remain on the very committee where the Institution had found he had worked his harm" remained. Like McGill, the senators attacked McCarthy's means, not the end he sought. Senator Arthur Watkins, who chaired the censure committee, noted that if McCarthy modified his behavior, he could be more effective than ever in his fight against Communism. Additionally, McCarthy's critics had said repeatedly during the censure hearings that they were not attacking his role as an anticommunist investigator. In fact, at the very time that the confrontation with McCarthy was beginning in the Senate, Democrats like Hubert Humphrey drafted and supported the Communist Control Act of 1954, which sought to outlaw the Communist Party. The Red Scare outlasted McCarthy, just as it had preceded him.[45]

McCarthy tried to retain his hold over the press, but he finally went too far. A few days after the censure vote, the senator released a statement apologizing for having supported Eisenhower for president and accusing him of being "soft" on the Communists who held American prisoners in China. Even those who had voted against censure recoiled from McCarthy's unprecedented act. The *Constitution's* staff editorial the following day was titled, "McCarthy Will Call Ike Traitor Next," and McGill's column proclaimed that the act was "Typical Slime By J. McCarthy." His anger was almost palpable: "Senator Joe McCarthy in as slimy a role as he has yet played, has accused Dwight D. Eisenhower, President of the United States, with being soft toward

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43. Hero, 78, 96.

44. Fried, *Nightmare in Red*, 141; Bayley, 209; "Senator McCarthy's Death;" David M. Oshinsky, *A Conspiracy So Immense: The World of Joe McCarthy* (New York: Free Press, 1983), 496; Thomas Reeves, *The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy: A Biography* (New York: Stein and Day, 1982), 665-6.

45. William S. White, *Citadel: The Story of the U.S. Senate* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), 126, 133; Fried, *Nightmare in Red*, 141,145, 172; Reeves, 665; Mary S. McAuliffe, "Liberals and the Communist Control Act," *Journal of American History* 63 (September 1976): 352.

communism...with encouraging Communists to torture American soldiers...."[46] In addition to condemning McCarthy, McGill defended the President. His policy

> will, in good time, win release of the prisoners...as boycott would make certain their long imprisonment or death. McCarthy knows this. But, one must assume the death of an American soldier, or his long rotting in jail, means nothing to McCarthy if he can use them to recover some of his lost prestige....[47]

Although McGill had not initially supported Eisenhower, McCarthy's decline brought an end to their differences.

McGill and McCarthy: Shaped by the Cold War

When McCarthy died in May of 1957, the *Constitution* was gracious if not forgiving. "Few people were not in sympathy with Senator McCarthy's attacks on communism," the staff editorial said. "But his methods damaged American prestige in every country which had looked to this nation as the champion of freedom of thought and action. His attacks on Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower were classics of totalitarian techniques....History will record the effects, past and future, of Senator McCarthy and what came to be known as McCarthyism. Loved and hated while on earth, may he rest in peace."[48]

Yet the forces that had made possible McCarthy's career had also influenced McGill, who wrote in 1954 that "it is vital to the future of this country that both communism and McCarthy be put down."[49] McGill was so deeply disillusioned by his experiences with the USSR that he never realized his outlook was as steeped in the Cold War mentality as McCarthy's own rhetoric. "[W]e have opposed McCarthy because it seemed always obvious he had no proof, and was but shouting and posturing because that was the way the tide of public opinion was running...," the editor wrote. "We want every Communist enemy caught and dealt with, but we want it done in the American manner."[50] McGill claimed to support the American ideal of "innocent until proven guilty," but this standard did not apply to Homer Chase, tried and convicted in the editor's page-one column.

McGill opposed McCarthy not because of a tolerance for alternative political views but because he believed the senator's actions aided the

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46. "McCarthy Will Call Ike a Traitor Next," *Constitution*, 8 December 1954, 4; "Ike Wisely Rejects Invitation to Brawl," *Constitution*, 9 December 1954, 4.
47. McGill, *Constitution*, 9 December 1954, 1. Ellipses McGill's, excluding indented section.
48. "Senator McCarthy's Death."
49. McGill, *Constitution*, 8 May 1954 and Fried, *Nightmare in Red*, 36.
50. McGill, *Constitution*, 1 and 5 October 1951.

Communist cause. He believed McCarthy injured the United States just as strongly as he believed segregation hurt the South, and this conviction, along with his respect for American institutions, made him a vehement opponent of the senator. In a column defending Anna Rosenberg, an aide to General George Marshall whom McCarthy accused of having Communist ties, McGill wrote that the senator "has created a fear in this country which matches the intangible and real fears produced by Communism's propaganda."[51] He also wrote to Rosenberg, saying, "I remain distressed by the McCarthy influences in and out of Congress. I am not naive enough to think he produces them. They have simply rallied about him, as they would and will rally around any other person who can express them."[52] Yet McGill treated McCarthy as a bad person, not as a part of a dysfunctional system. As the *Saturday Evening Post* editorial warned, "the McCarthy ruckus has got so far out of hand that this important issue has been forgotten, which undoubtedly suits the Communists just fine."[53] McGill agreed and so did his utmost to make certain his readers did not forget.

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51. McGill, *Constitution*, 14 December, 1950, 1.
52. McGill to Anna Rosenberg, 4 January 1951, Box 4, Folder 13, RMP.
53. "Deplore McCarthyism," 10.

'Right in the Führer's Face': American Editorial Cartoons of the World War II Period

By Paul P. Somers Jr.

The government did not attempt to control editorial cartoons in World War II as it had during World War I, but cheerleading newspapers and their cartoonists backed the war effort 100 percent. Clichés ruled as this effective form of propaganda boosted civilian morale and resolve. Enemies were frequently represented by hostile racial stereotypes.

Editorial cartoons have been a part of American politics and culture since 1754, when Benjamin Franklin designed "Join, or Die," depicting the colonies as a disjointed serpent. Dealing in the symbolic currency of their time, editorial cartoonists have expressed their opinions and those of their editors with enthusiasm and varying degrees of skill. There have been many attempts to explain them — and explain them away — yet their impact has never been analyzed satisfactorily. In a growing body of research, social scientists and others have struggled to analyze the mechanisms at work in the cartoonists' communication with their readers. As the lengthy list of titles consulted for this study shows (see note 29, below), however, the very fact that publishers have reprinted so many of the cartoons argues their value to readers.

Public figures from Boss Tweed to Governor Samuel Pennypacker to President Richard Nixon have acknowledged by their cries of outrage the effectiveness of the medium. Total war, however, imposes a very different set of strictures upon the mass media, even in a democracy. Indeed, it might be said that war provides the perfect conditions for the editorial cartoonist: no ambiguity, no opposing point of view, guaranteed 100 percent interest from the readers, and built up emotional tension.

To understand the relationship between the government and the print media in World War II, it is necessary to go back to World War I, which had seen the adaptation of propaganda to the modern state with modern communications technologies (as distinct from William Randolph Hearst's inciting of the Spanish-American War with his exuberant and shameless Yellow Journalism). President Wilson created the Committee on Public Information in April, 1917, and named journalist George Creel as its head. Within this committee was created a "Division of Pictorial Publicity," led by Charles Dana Gibson. A. E. Gallatin credits this agency with producing, free of charge, 700 posters, 287 cartoons, and 432 cards and newspaper ads.[1]

In December 1917, an organization calling itself the National Committee of Patriotic Societies[2] started the Bureau of Cartoons. This committee soon found itself under the direction of the Committee of Public Information and George J. Hecht, who later founded *True Comics* and *Parent's Magazine*. Hecht published a weekly "Bulletin for Cartoonists," which provided editorial cartoonists with such suggested topics for patriotic creativity as: "No Sunday Motoring" and "Can the Kaiser in the Kitchen." Hecht put out twenty-five issues of the Bulletin, the last in November 1918. With the overstatement so typical of the Progressives who had caught the war fever, Hecht proclaimed: "Never in history has there been presented so splendid an opportunity for cartoonists to demonstrate their power."[3]

Modern day scholars Stephen Hess and Milton Kaplan are less impressed, however. They wrote: "For most American cartoonists, however, the coming of war meant that patriotism replaced originality, and their role, as they saw it, became little more than government cheerleader."[4]

The other, higher-ranking, idealist, George Creel, also waxed superlative about his mission, which he viewed variously as "the world's greatest adventure in advertising," and "a fight for the mind of mankind." Committee of Public Information propaganda presented the war as "a Crusade not merely to rewin the tomb of Christ, but to bring back to earth the rule of right, the peace, goodwill to men, and gentleness he taught."[5] Little wonder that, when the victory dissolved into a series of back room deals and the glorious cause turned out to have had more to do with bank loans than with making the world safe for democracy, the American people would turn away in revulsion from Creel's (and Wilson's) brand of overstated government propaganda. Indeed, it was Creel's very success that gave "propaganda" a bad name: sauerkraut became liberty cabbage, hamburger became known as Salisbury steak, and

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1. Draper Hill, "History Corner," *American Association of Editorial Cartoonists' Newsletter*, March 1980, n.p.
2. Hill, "Whatever that might have been."
3. Hill, ibid.
4. Stephen Hess and Milton Kaplan, *The Ungentlemanly Art*, rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1975), 140.
5. Alan M.Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 3.

frankfurters and wieners became hot dogs.[6] Less amusing was the rise of implicitly sanctioned vigilantism: citizens formed groups named "Sedition Slammers," "Terrible Threateners," "Boy Spies of America," and the American Protective League, which itself boasted a quarter of a million members. German-Americans were fired from their jobs, beaten, even lynched, and German books were burned.[7]

Cartoonists did not need governmental encouragement to draw anti-German cartoons. On 8 April 1915 *Life* published "German Offensive," which depicted a meek little German man, dressed in lederhosen and the stereotypical alpenhut, riding a streetcar. He holds a crock of sauerkraut in his lap and the other passengers are moving away from him. *Life* also published a special "Traitors" issue in December, 1917, portraying German-Americans as potential saboteurs and advocating the suppression of free speech.[8]

With these zealous excesses still fresh in many Americans' memory, government management of public opinion at the beginning of World War II was viewed from the start with considerable suspicion, even under the threat of Hitler and Tojo. George Creel, himself, wrote "The Plight of the Last Censor" for *Colliers*, 24 May 1941. He asserted that censorship of the press had failed in World War I and would fail again. He advocated instead the censorship of cable and radio communication, which offered instant intelligence to enemies abroad, while the press and public opinion were to be left alone (35). Public opinion proved difficult to mobilize in the pre-Pearl Harbor period, even with two of the nation's leading editorial cartoonists embracing intervention early on. As Hess and Kaplan write:

> The 1930's also witnessed the rise of Hitlerism in Europe, and most American cartoonists (like the majority of the people for whom they drew) felt neither overly concerned nor personally threatened. Rather than portray Hitler as the terrifying would-be conqueror that he was, they were more apt to pictorially turn him into a comic figure — mountebank, village idiot, or just that little man with the funny mustache.[9]

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6. For studies of George Hecht and the cartoon war, see George J. Hecht, "How the Cartoonist Can Help Win the War," *Cartoons Magazine*, February 1918; and *The War in Cartoons* (New York: Dutton, 1919); Allan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942-1945*, 2-3; Steve M. Barkin, "Fighting the Cartoon War: Information Strategies in World War II," *Journal of American Culture* 7 (1984), 113; A. E. Gallatin, *Art and the Great War* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1919); and Matthew Goode, "Obey the Law and Keep Your Mouths shut," *Michigan History* 78 (1994): 18-24.

7. Joseph R. Conlin, *The American Past*, 3d ed., pt. 2 (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990), 672-3.

8. John and Selma Appel, *The Distorted Image; Stereotype and Caricature in American Popular Graphics, 1852-1922* (New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'Nai B'Rith, n.d.), 66-67.

9. Hess and Kaplan, 155.

There are numerous examples of this counter-productive belittling of a man who would prove to be one of history's greatest monsters:

"Digestive Troubles" is a whimsical, down-home metaphor picturing the world as an apple tree, the fruits of conquest labeled with the names of countries. Little boys Hitler, "Il Duce," and "Japan," having eaten "Poland," "France," "China," "Albania," and several other apples, are doubled over with stomachaches ("Ding" Darling, *Des Moines Register*, 8 February 1941).[10]

"And all on Account of this Little Guy" shows an inch-high Hitler against a blank 6 inch by 8 inch white background. (Herblock, *New York World-Telegram*, 4 September 1939).[11]

Baby Mussolini, wearing a bonnet, plays in the sand of Somaliland. Hitler, clad in a dress with a Swastika pendant and carrying a tank as a purse, tells him: "Benito, you play in the sand till mother calls" (Rube Goldberg, *New York Sun*, Tuesday, 13 August 1940).[12]

Hess and Kaplan also write of "Two cartoonists in the Middle West, historically the home of American isolationism, [who] took the lead in trying to explain the menace of events across the Atlantic." [The liberal Daniel R. Fitzpatrick of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and the conservative Vaughn Shoemaker of the *Chicago Daily News*.][13]

Examples of their work, some of the most powerful of the period before Pearl Harbor, include Fitzpatrick's "Next!" in which a great swastika, "a huge, tumbling engine of destruction," [the artist's own words] is about to crush Poland (24 August 1939).[14] Shoemaker drew "Take Me to Czechoslovakia, Driver," in which Hitler from the back seat of a taxi is shouting directions to the driver, a skeleton in jaunty cap and wind-blown scarf (*Chicago Daily News*, 8 September 1938).[15] Jacob Burck of the *Chicago Sun-Times* won the Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Cartooning in 1940 for "If I Should die Before I wake . . . ," which depicts a little girl —nationality not specified — saying her bedtime prayers in a bombed-out building.[16]

Colonel Robert R. McCormick, influential, conservative owner of the *Chicago Tribune*, however, would have no part of preparedness. Believing that Roosevelt wanted to use the war as a pretense to establish a dictatorship, he opposed the war and did battle with his journalistic rivals, the *Daily News* and,

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10. *What America Thinks* (Chicago: What America Thinks, Inc., 1941), 1490.
11. Ibid., 1.
12. Ibid., 1266.
13. Hess and Kaplan, 155.
14. Hess and Kaplan, 156. This support was not unwavering: Fitzpatrick's response to the Lend-Lease Act was "The People Try to Get the White House Viewpoint," depicting a John Q. Public figure in front of the White House, standing on his head. Foreign Policy Association, *Cartoon History of U. S. Foreign Policy Since World War I* (New York: Random House, 1967), 58.
15. Hess and Kaplan, 156.
16. John Chase, *Today's Cartoon* (New Orleans: Hauser Press, 1962), n.p.

especially, the newer, Democratic *Sun-Times.*[17] A representative *Tribune* cartoon, drawn by Carey Orr, is "The Only Way We Can Save Her." Uncle Sam stands on the shore of "America, the Last Refuge of Democracy," watching the conflagration of "War Mad Europe" across the Atlantic. At his feet, the female figure of Democracy kneels and begs him: "Stay out! Stay out for my sake, as well as your own."[18] After Pearl Harbor McCormick joined whole-heartedly in the cause, marshaling a formidable arsenal of popular editorial cartoonists: Orr, Joseph Parrish, Carl Somdal, and John T. McCutcheon, although the latter, creator of the bucolic *Bird Center* cartoons, found it difficult to get angry even at Der Führer.[19]

The opposing point of view found graphic expression, as well: "Our Little Friends," a notable interventionist cartoon from 1940, was drawn by Bert Thomas of the *Detroit News.* It shows Peter Pan, Alice (carrying the White Rabbit), David Copperfield, and Tiny Tim dodging bomb blasts during a Nazi air attack on London [20] The cover artwork of *Collier's* for 14 June 1941, showed a head and shoulders view of a pair of newlyweds, she in wedding veil and carrying flowers, both wearing army-style helmets. Along with the flying rice, a shoe bounces off her helmet. The lead article: "Impregnable Pearl Harbor."

Although no studies are available on editorial cartoons themselves, Steve M. Barkin has examined the government's treatment of comic strips and books.[21] As part of the pre-Pearl Harbor mobilization, the government established the Office of Facts and Figures in October 1941 to provide the press with information on the economy and the war effort. The *New York Herald Tribune* dubbed it "The Office of Fun and Frolic," even though its head was the respected poet Archibald MacLeish. "Here's Where We Get OFF," proclaimed their editorial.[22]

After MacLeish urged that OFF be reorganized, President Roosevelt issued an executive order on 13 June 1942, creating the Office of War Information. OFF's Bureau of Intelligence was transferred into the OWI and charged with analyzing the popular media's treatment of various themes dealing with the fighting and winning of the war. In addition to the predictable charges of articulating the national goals and coordinating informational activities of the various governmental agencies, the OWI was directed to determine the informational and propaganda value of strip comics.

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17. Jerome E. Edwards, *The Foreign Policy of Col. McCormick's Tribune, 1929-1941* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1971).
18. Foreign Policy Association, 51.
19. Nancy Pogel and Paul P. Somers Jr., "The Chicago Cartoonists, Left and Right," (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Popular Culture Association, Detroit, Mich., April 1980).
20. Joseph F. Carpentier and Al'Fred S. Scarcelli, *Original Political Cartoons of World War II* (Garden City, Mich.: J. Carpentier, 1994), 107.
21. "Fighting the Cartoon War: Information Strategies in World War II," *Journal of American Culture* 7 (1984): 113-117.
22. Winkler, 22-23.

Apparently, repeated exposure to the images presented in comic books had some effect. Studying a one-week period in March 1942, OFF researchers found that about one-third of newspaper comics and forty percent of magazine comics used wartime situations. Further, they rarely dealt with actual combat and were generally "good-natured."[23]

The OWI report also noted the prevalence of physical stereotypes in the comics. Two other special intelligence reports later that year showed that "the content of comic strips and syndicated cartoons did little in a consistent or straightforward way to advance American information objectives."[24]

At the conclusion of his study, Barkin notes that "the experience with comics had not been especially satisfactory," because "Comic strips in newspapers and magazines did not lend themselves to control or manipulation." The stereotypes and simplistic approaches to the war, unsuited to the needs of a sophisticated government agency, had already influenced public attitudes. And accusations of partisanship leveled at the government-produced comics were quite discouraging. "OWI ultimately decided to leave comics alone for the remainder of the war, ironically after demonstrating the considerable power of cartoon images and their undeniable hold on the American public."[25] Writers J. Clarke Mattimore and Hannibal Coons paid a contemporary tribute in "The Fighting Funnies": "The power of comic strips over American citizens, both large and small, has left our admirals and generals in a state of startled gratitude."[26]

With the government deciding, rather reluctantly, not to regulate cartoons, it remained to be seen what editorial cartoonists and their editors would make of this freedom. Much of what the OWI found about comic books and comic strips holds true for editorial cartoons. According to Hess and Kaplan:

> Once America entered the war, cartoons became predictably bland. "Ding" Darling won the 1943 Pulitzer Prize for an attack on excessive governmental paperwork, one of the rare issues on which there could hardly be dissent.[27] The only really exceptional cartooning was done by Sgt. Bill Mauldin, whose "Willie and Joe" showed the people back home what war looked like from a foxhole.[28]

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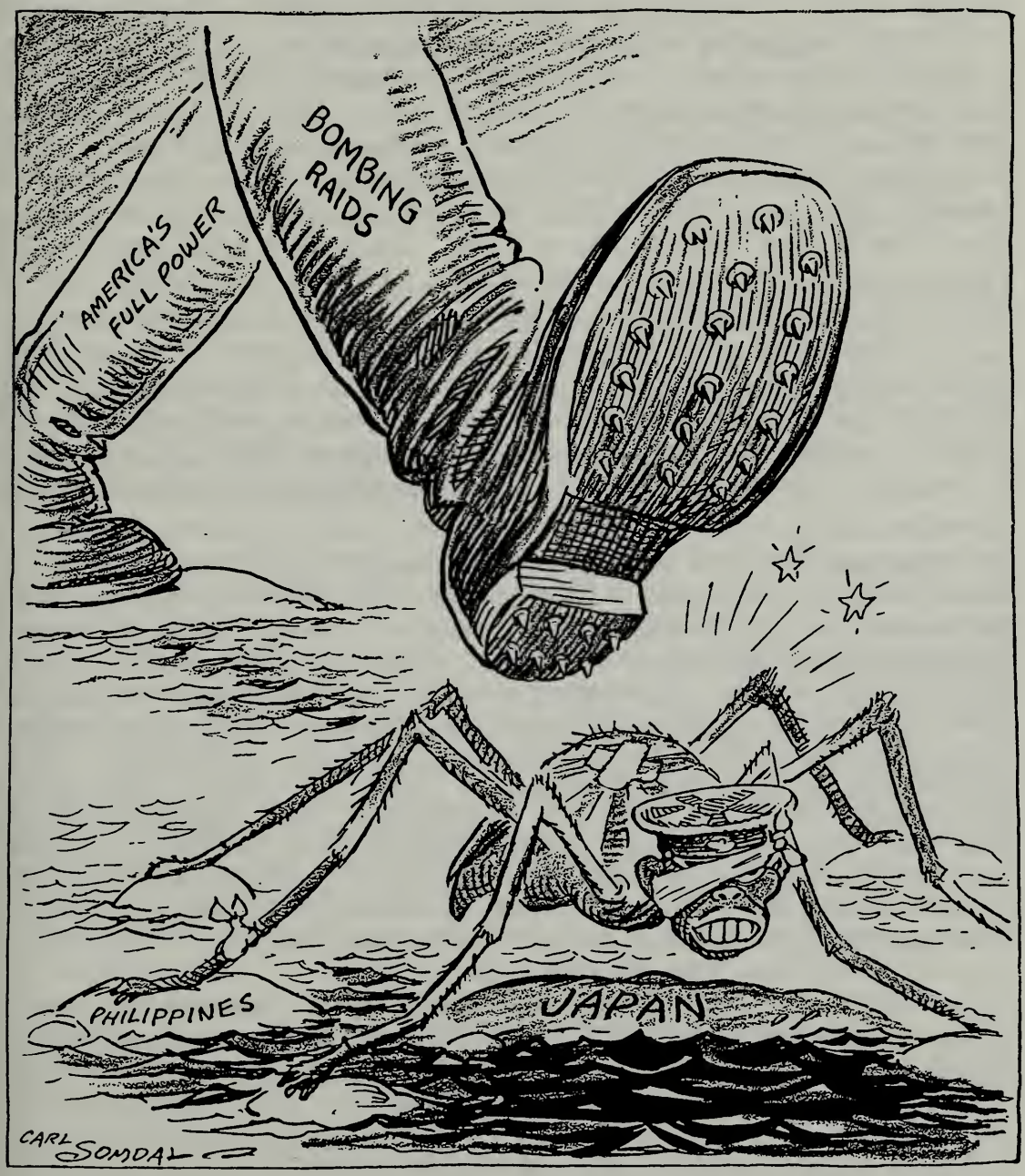
23. Barkin, "Fighting the Cartoon War," 114. For more on comics and cartoons of the period, see Rick Marschall's "The World War II Cartoonist Corps," *Nemo* 12, June 1985, 5-20.
24. Barkin, 115.
25. Barkin, 117.
26. 29 January 1944, 24, ff.(24).
27. Jay N. Darling, *Ding's Half Century* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1962), n.p.
28. Hess and Kaplan, 157.

ONE GOOD STEP DESERVES ANOTHER



THE ENEMY AS VERMIN. Carl Somdal, *Chicago Tribune*, 24 April 1942.

The tools of the editorial cartoonists' trade were pen or brush, ink, and paper. The materials of the trade were and still are the allusions, metaphors, and clichés which the cartoonists use in order to communicate with the readers. Surveying the editorial cartoons about the war, one notices several prevalent motifs. A qualitative survey rather than a quantitative analysis, this section

draws upon a review of more than 1,500 cartoons collected in anthologies and scrapbooks.[29]

To a considerable extent, cartoonists were content to rely on traditional national symbols: England was either John Bull or a lion — the latter fitting readily into lion-taming situations (see examples below). The Bengal tiger representing India was also in the cartoonist's menagerie: in Orr's "Better Wait until after the Hunting Season," the Bengal tiger — India — paces in its cage with the Union Jack on the bars. Outside, in the landscape of Freedom, from behind a sign "Jap Agitation," the silhouetted figure of a soldier calls "Meowrr! Meowrr!" (23 August 1942, 157). Cartoonists also made use of the Russian Bear: "But the Bear Opens the Season First." The Russian Bear jumps tattered Hitler on the Eastern Front.[30] (Orr, 21 May 1942, 96). A full-color Lawson Wood cartoon shows Hitler as an organ grinder's monkey to the Russian bear.[31]

Uncle Sam made his last (to date) great showing as the positive, unequivocal symbol of America's might and authority. Stern-faced, often with his sleeves rolled up, he rallied the beleaguered citizens in countless cartoons and posters. Another venerable symbol, Miss Liberty or Miss Columbia, also reappeared in this time of need: in "This Young Lady Is Not the Hysterical

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29. *What America Thinks* (Chicago: What America Thinks, Inc., 1941); John Chase, *Today's Cartoon* (New Orleans: Hauser Press, 1962); *War Cartoons by McCutcheon, Orr, Parrish [and] Somdal;* reprinted from the *Chicago Tribune,* 8 December 1941-28 September 1942 (Chicago: Tribune Co., 1942); *Cartoons, State, National, International.* Unpaginated scrapbook of editorial cartoons from the Special Collections Division, Michigan State University Library, East Lansing, Mich.; Mark Bryant, *World War II in Cartoons* (New York: Gallery Books, 1989); Bill Mauldin, *Up Front,* 50th Anniversary ed. (New York: Norton, 1991); Arthur Szyk, *The New Order* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1941), and *Blood and Ink* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1946); Reg Manning, *Little Itchy Itchy, and Other Cartoons* (New York, J. J. Augustin, 1944); Jim Ivey, *U. S. History in Cartoons: the Civil War through World War II* (Longwood, Fla.: International Media Systems, Inc., 1979); and Foreign Policy Association, *Cartoon History of U. S. Foreign Policy Since World War I* (New York: Random House, 1967).

Scholars are by no means in agreement as to how to approach such popular culture materials. Ted Goertzel, in "The Gulf War as a Mental Disorder? A Statistical Test of DeMause's Hypothesis," *Political Psychology* 14 (1993), cites the 1992 meetings of the International Psychohistory Association. "One participant objected vehemently that quantitative sampling was a waste of time, since one cartoonist who is in touch with the mood of the masses is more meaningful than several hundred who are not . . . ." Goertzel also writes that some other way of assessing "the true mood of the masses must be found. . . Otherwise, there is no way to know whether the cartoonists selected reflect the national psyche or just the preconceptions of the analyst," 722. He argues that, whatever the case, the cartoons do reach an educated, influential segment of the population, 723.

30. *War Cartoons by McCutcheon, Orr, Parrish [and] Somdal;* 103. All subsequent references to this book will be made by page numbers within the text.

31. *Cartoons, State, National, International.* Unpaginated scrapbook of editorial cartoons from the Special Collections Division of the Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich.

Kind," a personified, banana-yellow U-boat with a pirate patch on one eye and flying the Jolly Roger clambers out of coastal waters to confront a flag-draped Miss Liberty, who is about to draw her saber. A sign next to the submarine reads: "Submarine raids on American coasts to distract U. S. Navy." The U-boat says: "Why don't you scream for help?" (Parrish, 23 January 1942, 39).

As women entered the military, Miss Columbia, or Miss Liberty, joined the recruiting team: On 22 July 1942, Parrish drew "Something New has Been Added." On a wall beside the old Uncle Sam poster hangs a new one, with Miss Columbia pointing out. The caption: "I want YOU for the Army." A passing WAC salutes smartly (18). Miss Liberty often appeared in a contemporary, coquettish guise.

Sports being a national obsession, it is fitting that many cartoons are couched in terms of the games we play; baseball probably was the most popular during the World War II period. Frank Williams of the *Detroit Free Press* drew the "European War" as a gladiator wooing the blushing woman, "Public Interest," saying, "This one will slay you." A grim baseball player, "Baseball Training Season," brandishing a bat, approaches to divert her attention.[32] Carey Orr, who had played baseball professionally, frequently used it as metaphor. In his baseball cartoon for 7 May 1942, "The Old Teamwork — Citizen to Worker to Fighter." the public is urged to "Buy the Bonds to Buy the Guns to Bye-Bye Hitler." The figures of "War Shortages" and Hitler run the bases in the background (90). He also drew "Now You're Pitchin' Uncle" on 23 February 1942. Uncle Sam, wearing a tag, "U. S.-Dutch Teamwork," beans the Japanese batter with a baseball labeled "Java Sea Battle" (52). On 23 June 1942, the *Tribune* published Somdal's cartoon of Japan stealing home (121).

Football was another popular metaphor: in "1938's Four Horsemen" Vaughn Shoemaker of the *Chicago Daily News* made a football allusion, rather than a Biblical one, as he drew "War" joining Hitler, Mussolini, and Tojo on the gridiron, where they are about to trample the tiny John Q. Public figure (also in football uniform) labeled "Peaceful Nations."[33] In "Hold That Line," 29 August 1942, Carl Somdal presented Hitler as a giant ball carrier being tackled by a Russian (162).

Boxing was also well represented. In Carey Orr's "The Power Behind the Punch" for 19 August 1942, Uncle Sam, taking shape out of the smoke of "U. S. War Industries," has knocked down the Japanese fighter. Just nine days later, Orr returned to the ring for "Bringing One Up from the Floor": Russia, a bloodied, kneeling fighter with the tag "Stalingrad" beside him, raises up a desperation punch — "Moscow Front" that catches jubilant Hitler in the jaw (160).

Golf provides the metaphor for Jerry Doyle's *Philadelphia Record* cartoon of Tuesday, 3 September 1940. In the first panel, Hitler's caddie, Goebbels, shows the score card for "Blitzkrieg Links." Hitler has shot par for Poland, Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, and France. Across the English

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32. Ibid.
33. Mark Bryant, *World War II in Cartoons* (New York: Gallery Books, 1989), 17.

Channel, the Union Jack marks the next hole. In the second panel, a frustrated Hitler stands among a pile of bent and broken clubs, concentric circles marking the balls he has hit into the Channel. "That *!-*! water hole!" he complains.[34]

Card games, especially poker, have long been graphic currency. In "Calling His Bluff," (artist's signature indecipherable) from the *Tampa Morning Tribune* for Wednesday, 21 September 1938, England and France "give up," allowing Hitler to rake in a pile of chips representing the Sudeten. The dismayed Czech player, pistol on the table, says in dismay: "Whataya mean, we give up? I'm playing these."[35]

Cartoonists also used clichés and old saws to make a point:

"Old Gray Mare Ain't What She Used to Be." Buzzards circle horseman Hitler, whose "Famous War Horse 'Blitzkrieg' " is faltering outside Moscow (Orr, 18 March 1942, 62).

"Keeping His Nose the Grindstone." A handsome General MacArthur holds to the grindstone of "U. S. Arms" the nose of "Japan," whose face is shaded to make it appear dark (Somdal, 2 April 1942, 70).

"Chickens Also Come Home to Lay!" In one of the more visually amusing of these cartoons, a four-engined bomber with the head and claws of a chicken is dropping egg bombs leading up to a small nest with one hatched egg in it: "Tokio, Where the Pearl Harbor and Manila plots Were Hatched." A stereotyped Japanese figure in bowler hat and kimono dodges bombs (Parrish, 20 April 1942, 80).

The old "shot in the arm" proved a popular figure of speech. Somdal used it to praise the freedom of press in "We Can Take It," for 6 February 1942. Uncle Sam rolls up his sleeve as a gladiator, "War," prepares to give him a shot with the big hypodermic needle of "Truth," filled from bottles marked "War News" and "Hard Facts." Typical of John T. McCutcheon's cartoons, uplifting and morale-building rather than hate-inspiring, is "Whee! Now MacArthur Is in Charge!" A smiling, almost silly-looking Uncle Sam figure labeled "American Morale," is invigorated as he gets that shot in the arm. Tiny, not objectionably stereotyped, "Mr. Moto" in the lower right corner says: "So Sorry!" (18 March 1942, 62).

Allusions, both historical and Biblical, were popular. On 6 March 1942, Parrish drew "Restless Ghost of the Alamo." The ghosts of Davy Crockett, Bill Travis, and Jim Bowie look over the ramparts of the Alamo to the far-off smoke of MacArthur fighting on Bataan (58). And a world war certainly cries out for the Spirit of '76, as in Orr's 27 April 1942 effort, "The Old Spirit Marches Again." A la the "Spirit of '76," one drummer boy's drum reads "21 to 35"; the fife player's suit jacket says "35 to 54"; and the central figure cries "Yippee! Let's go!" as he plays a drum labeled, "45 to 65 Joining the Parade" (84).

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34. *What America Thinks*, 1296.
35. Ibid., 356.

WATCH THAT RUNNER, BOYS!

THE SPORTS METAPHOR: UNCLE SAM AND JOHN BULL CONFER. Carl Somdal, *Chicago Tribune*, 23 June 1942.

Searching for widely recognizable frames of references, editorial cartoonists sometimes employed Biblical allusions, as in a *Dallas Journal* cartoon for Wednesday, 9 October 1941, "Handwriting on the Wall" (artist's signature illegible). At a banquet consisting of spaghetti for Il Duce and sausage

for Der Führer, the celebrants read: "A lot of things are going to happen . . . to Hitler and Mussolini. (signed) Churchill."[36]

Jerry Doyle drew "Balaam Shows the Way" for the *Philadelphia Record* on Thursday 6 June 1940. Smug Hitler crosses a field of skulls labeled "War Horror" mounted upon an ass, Mussolini, who has a bit in his mouth and wears a donkey-eared cap.[37]

In praise of conservation on the home front, Orr's "O.K. David, Let Him Have It!" shows the ordinary citizen as David standing on a pile of "Rubber Salvage" and aiming his slingshot at the "Nazi Goliath," an amalgam of the German and Japanese enemy (13 June 1942, 117).

In a rare classical allusion, Orr drew "Volga Boatman" in which Charon poles a barge laden with "Germans Slain in Stalingrad Drive" (25 August 1942, 159).

Orr's "Achilles' Heel — Keep Shooting" shows an arrow, "Super Air Raids," striking the Hun (Hitler's War Machine) in the Achilles heel of "Nazi War Industries" (3 August 1942, 144).

Lion-taming (discussed below) was a popular metaphor, enabling the artist to employ readily recognizable national symbols: for 7 July 1942, Orr inked "Rommel's Painful Discovery." Having acquired "A new set of uppers from America — U. S. Air Fighters," the British lion is chasing his Nazi lion tamer around the cage (130). In "The Obstinate Dragon" by Parrish for 19 July 1942, a tiny Japanese animal tamer has forced the British lion, Dutch lioness, and Philippines cat onto pedestals marked "Jap control." The entire cage is encircled by a sleeping dragon, "Vast China," and the eagle of "American Vengeance" is about to swoop. The lion tamer says: "Hurry! Get the Rest of You on Here!" (136).

Burglary was a common and appropriate metaphor for the way in which the Axis powers plundered conquered territories: in "Speaking of Loot," drawn by Parrish for 6 February 1942, policeman Uncle Sam is moving to stop a stereotyped Japanese soldier laden down with treasures such as "Oil," "Tin," "Food," "Rubber," etc., on the shore of "Western Pacific." A citizen cries "Stop! Thief" and points to the background, where bag-carrying burglar Adolph Hitler is pursued by Russia, represented as a stout peasant woman wearing a babushka, who is beating him with a fire poker. Using a similar motif, Orr drew a back view of Hitler trying to climb through a window of a building labeled "Russian Front." Russia, represented as a stern, muscular young woman with a white star on her bosom, has slammed the window on his head. As Hitler's rear end protrudes invitingly, the foreground of the color panel is

36. Ibid., 1338. Associations of Mussolini with spaghetti were frequent, as in Frank Williams' "Spaghetti Eater's Woes" in the *Kalamazoo Gazette* for 20 December 1940. *What America Thinks*, 1472.
37. Ibid., 1116.

dominated by a nail-festooned paddle labeled "All-out Air Smash on the West Front" (10 March 1942, 59).[38]

The boomerang metaphor proved popular, presenting the Allied bombings as Hitler's earlier air raids on London coming back on him. In the cartoon by Herc Ficklen of the *Dallas Morning News*, for Monday, 2 September 1940, the boomerang takes the shape of a Swastika labeled "R. A. F. Reprisal Raids."[39]

Hitler's early career as a paperhanger provided a handy tool in the wishful process of diminishing Der Führer: Jerry Doyle drew "The Paperhanger's Assistant Has an Accident" for the *Philadelphia Record*, Tuesday, 3 December 1940. With Hitler working on one end of the scaffold hanging swastika wallpaper, Mussolini has fallen off the other, upsetting a bucket of paste — "Italian Reversals" — onto his head.[40] Orr's "Paper Hanger's Jitters" shows Hitler struggling to stay on his ladder as his swastika-decorated wallpaper peels off under the vibrations of "U. S. Bombers Moving in Upstairs" (6 June 1942, 128).

It is no surprise that many wartime cartoons employed racist stereotypes. Just as there are no atheists in foxholes, so there are precious few liberals. John W. Dower, who wrote about the racial aspects of world War II in *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, makes the point that the hostility to the Japanese was more racial, that they were frequently referred to as "Nips," while the Germans were more likely to be called "Nazis."[41] To the contrary, Bill Mauldin, known as a liberal in his postwar career, found it difficult to be generous to the Germans back when he was a cartoonist for *Stars and Stripes*:

> The American has lost nothing to the Germans, so his war is being fought for more farfetched reasons.
>
> He didn't learn to hate the Germans until he came over here. He didn't realize the immense threat that faced his nation until he saw how powerful and cruel and ruthless the German nation was. He learned that the Nazi is simply a symbol of the German people, as his father learned that the Kaiser was only a symbol. . . .

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38. The recurrent theme of anal sadism in wartime cartoons is better explored in a psychological study. One of the many examples was "Execution of Honorable Swift Kick," drawn by Parrish for 1 May 1942: a stereotyped Japanese soldier wearing bandages marked "Bataan" and "Corregidor" has been kicked by Uncle Sam's spiked boot, setting off a shower of cartoon stars of pain labeled "Coral Sea Rout"(93). See DeMause, (17, Illustration 10), wherein he reprints a cartoon of Saddam Hussein, his pants on fire, closely pursued by a missile labeled "Be My Valentine." DeMause's comment: "On Valentine's Day, America Yearns For Anal Rape."

39. *What America Thinks*, 1290. See also Orr, 4 June 1942, 108; and Somdal, 5 May 1942, 89.

40. Ibid., 1440.

41. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 77-93.

> The very professionalism of the krauts which makes the American infantryman respect the German infantryman also makes him hate the German's guts even more. The dogface is quite human about things, and he hates and doesn't understand a man who can, under orders, put every human emotion aside, as the Germans can and do.[42]

John Morton Blum quotes him: "When our guys cringe under an 88 barrage, you don't hear them say 'Those dirty Nazis.' You hear them say, 'Those goddam Krauts.' "[43]

Yet, on the rare occasion when he drew a German soldier, Mauldin portrayed him realistically — bearded, tired, and dirty — just like Willie and Joe, except in a different uniform.[44]

Sam Keen's *Faces of the Enemy* has a section on "The Enemy as Barbarian," showing how the Hun, the Turk, Tojo, the Bolshevik Giant, the Ayatollah, and others are portrayed as barbarians by their foes. He notes that "The barbarian theme was widely used in World War II propaganda by all participants."[45] *Chicago Tribune* artist Carey Orr dusted off the venerable Hun figure from World War I. On 16 July 1942, he drew "The challenge — so Far Unanswered," outfitting the classic Teutonic barbarian with a trident for the "U-Boat War" (134). Again, on 12 September Orr's Hun represented "Nazi World Domination" (167). Nazi Germany was often portrayed as a vulture: on 14 July 1942, Somdal's "Time Bomb" shows a swastika-emblazoned vulture, black hair brushed across his forehead Hitler style, sitting on the ticking bomb of "The New Order" (133).

More literal depictions of Germany were generally benevolent. Parrish's cartoon "Steady Diet" for 20 September 1942, shows a restaurant wherein hangs a picture of Hitler as the "Lyre Bird," which has laid eggs labeled "Lie." The waiter, carrying a gun and a hand towel labeled "Gestapo" forces "Germany," a battered old man with a clothespin on his nose (suggesting the German people's resistance to the Nazi line) to eat a "Lie" egg of Nazi Propaganda. "Any Complaints?" asks the waiter. "Nein! Nein! It iss goot!" says the suffering citizen (170). In Orr's cartoon for 27 March 1942, "The Seeds of Doubt Have Been Sown," the frost-encrusted "Weatherman, Conqueror of Hitler," touches a ragged man in a workman's cap, "The German People," who regards a copy of *Mein Kampf* lying on the ground and wonders: "Py golly, maybe he is only a paper hanger?" In contrast to the negative Japanese stereotype used so freely by Orr, the tattered figure of the plump German is quite kindly represented (67). "Wonder if He Has Started Working on Fritz Yet?" by Orr for 25 May 1942, shows The "War of Nerves" frightening "Germany," a fat,

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42. Bill Mauldin, *Up Front*, 50th Anniversary ed. (New York: Norton, 1991), 52-53.
43. John Morton Blum, *V Was for Victory* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 69.
44. Mauldin, 91.
45. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986), 44.

(but not inhuman) hatless soldier whose uniform coat is too tight (100). Polish refugee Arthur Szyk was a notable exception to such magnanimity. His brilliant Gothic caricatures of Hitler and his officers, painted in color with painstaking attention to detail, have been widely admired.[46]

The graphic representation of Japan and the Japanese in general was far more vicious, in part because the attack on Pearl Harbor made the Pacific War more personal, more of an immediate threat to the United States; and because the Japanese were more "alien," and had fewer citizens (and voters) here than did the Germans. For sheer, malicious glee, no cartoonist outdid Reg Manning, creator of "Little Itchy Itchy," a hostile stereotype of a Japanese soldier. Undersized, buck-toothed and bespectacled (as most editorial cartoonists drew the Japanese soldier), Little Itchy Itchy appears in numerous cartoons holding on a pillow a "Hara-Kiri" knife, which he offers to various Japanese Generals, Admirals, and the Emperor himself as he utters the line which became his trademark: "Now?" Later in the war, he acquired an assistant, Itchy Twitchy, who carried a golf bag full of the ceremonial knives.[47]

Japan and the Japanese were frequently depicted as vermin. [Keen has titled another section of his book "The Enemy as Beast, Reptile, Insect, Germ" (60-64)]. Dower quotes combat reporter Ernie Pyle: "In Europe we felt that our enemies, horrible and deadly as they were, were still people. . . . But out here I soon gathered that the Japanese were looked upon as something subhuman and repulsive; the way some people feel about cockroaches or mice." Pyle did not disagree.[48]

Under the pressure of daily deadlines, many cartoonists found the concept of "Japanese Beetle" irresistible. Reg Manning drew "The Plague," in which a line of Japanese beetles, with Japanese facial features, rising suns on their backs (a common cartoonist's device), extends from the horizon to the foreground.[49] Somdal's "One good Step Deserves Another" shows a spiked boot

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46. *The New Order* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1941): This volume reprints the caricature of Hitler as Attila the Hun. Arthur Szyk, *Ink and Blood* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1946). These scathing caricatures include the "Niebelungen Series," and "Krauts through the Ages."

Szyk has been widely honored: the French Ministry of Art decorated him, as didthe Polish Government. His work has been extensively exhibited and hangs in the White House and Windsor Castle. [Introduction to *The New Order.*]

47. Reg Manning, *Little Itchy Itchy, and Other Cartoons* (New York, J. J. Augustin, 1944). Manning's autobiographical sketch in John Chase's *Today's Cartoon* (1962) makes no mention of this ultra-patriotic collection, which was published in the heat of world War II, although he does reprint one Little Itchy Itchy cartoon. Manning also had a bad word — or drawing — for Stalin: "But Confidentially —" In the "Anti-Hitler Bed," Uncle Sam and John Bull hold their noses and John sprays an atomizer at grimy Joe Stalin, smoking a pipe, his holey, stockinged feet prominently displayed. [*Arizona Republic* (undated) in John Chase's *Today's Cartoon* (n.p., alphabetical entries)].

48. Dower, 78; 311, n. 3. He notes numerous print references to the Japanese as vipers and other vermin, 81-85.

49. Reg Manning, 34.

labeled "Bombing Raids" about to stomp on what is either a six-legged spider or a very spindly beetle, which is crouched over Japan with one leg on the Philippines. The spider/beetle has a rising sun on its back, slant eyes, buck teeth, and wears a Japanese officer's cap (24 April 1942, 83). F. O. Alexander's 1942 cartoon shows a grinning, slant-eyed spider with rising sun on its back, crouched over the Pacific, each of its eight legs holding with chicken claws onto a conquered land.[50]

In "When the Cats Are Away," 1939, Herblock depicted two little Japanese mice (albeit cute ones) in military uniforms studying "Campaign Plans" to take the large cheese labeled "Asia." In the background, the British lion fights with two tigers, one marked with Swastikas and the other with a hammer and sickle flag on its tail.[51] Carl Somdal represented Japan as a rat gnawing at the bait ("Early Gains") in a trap, about to be crushed by a heavy bag labeled "America's Strength" (29 January 1942, 42).

On 12 December 1942, Arthur Szyk's cover painting for *Collier's* commemorated Pearl Harbor. A huge bat with Japanese features and long fangs, wearing a Japanese military uniform and saber, carries a large bomb decorated with Japanese characters and a skull and cross bones.[52]

Escalating the dehumanizing comparisons, cartoonists and caricaturists frequently represented the enemy as some sort of ape, or, even more demeaningly, as a monkey.[53] This reduction of another race or ethnic group was nothing new. John and Selma Appel have documented how Irish- and African-Americans were thus represented in American cartoons.[54]

Sy Moyer depicted in 1942 a brutish "Tojo," blood dripping from his teeth and fingernails, crouching over a corpse labeled "Murdered American Airmen."[55] The *Collier's* cover for 8 May 1943, drawn by London-born illustrator Lawson Wood, depicted a downed Zero sinking in the ocean. In the foreground two chimpanzees with Japanese features and aviator's caps clumsily paddle a life raft.[56]

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50. Jim Ivey, *U. S. History in Cartoons; the Civil War through World War II* (Longwood, Fla.: International Media Systems, Inc., 1979), 86.
51. Foreign Policy Association, 37.
52. Bryant, p. 74.
53. A drawing by Fred Lasswell on the cover of *Leatherneck* for September 1945, shows a jubilant U. S. soldier snuggling up to his pet, a pouting Japanese monkey (Dower, fig. 9).
54. *The Distorted Image*, 39. Also note Dower's chapter, "Apes and Others," 77-93, as well as the numerous illustrations, 180-90. He reproduces several Japanese cartoons ridiculing and demonizing their Western enemies, especially Churchill and Roosevelt, 191-98.
55. Keen, *Faces of the Enemy*, 45
56. Bryant, 34. The impact of this is softened somewhat when it is viewed in the context of Wood's work: His *Collier's* cover for 13 November 1943, shows two chimps in U. S. sailor suits shaving a third.

MAYBE WE OUGHT TO TAKE A FEW LESSONS

ALLIED COOPERATION AS A MODEL FOR JOHN BULL AND UNCLE SAM. Carey Orr, *Chicago Tribune*, 18 February 1942. Cartoons reprinted by permission of the *Chicago Tribune*.

Because no study of American attitudes toward Japan before and during World War II would be complete without some reference to the "Yellow Peril," Parrish's "Out for Vengeance" cartoon for 2 December 1942, should be noted:

the American eagle is attacking a crocodile labeled "Japan" with Asian facial features and a "Yellow Peril" flag on its tail (p. 17).[57]

Cartoonists occasionally combined the features of both enemies in a single figure. In "That Postwar Picture" for 28 July 1942, a stern Uncle Sam as a photographer, holding up the little birdie of "Peace," points the "camera" with its cannon barrel labeled force at "the Axis." This uniformed figure has slant eyes and a Hitlerian mustache and wears a swastika on its sleeve. *Collier's* used cartoon illustrations to illustrate its editorials. Most of these were drawn by Pulitzer-Prize winner D. R. Fitzpatrick. One, illustrating "What We Are Fighting," has as its header a drawing of a generally Caucasian-featured yet slant-eyed brute, a Swastika on one uniform sleeve and the Rising Sun on the other, dragging itself toward the reader by means of a dagger (21 March 1942, 66). Del Brinkman in "Do Editorial Cartoons and Editorials Change Opinions?" found that editorials and editorial cartoons "do bring about opinion change (reversion and conversion)" [726] and that the two used together to present the same argument are more effective in achieving opinion change than if the two are presented separately, in either order.[58] The only change in opinion the World War II American cartoonists wanted to achieve was to convince the discouraged and uncertain that America could indeed win the war. *Colliers* regularly

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57. Having established the damning power of the Japanese stereotype, the *Tribune* wielded it on the home front. *Thunderer of the Prairies; a Selection of Wartime Editorials and Cartoons, 1941-1944* (Chicago: Tribune Co., 1944) was published by the *Tribune* three years before its hundredth anniversary. In the foreword the self-designated "Thunderer of the Prairies" congratulates itself on being a "fighting paper." The editors used all of the war cartoons for the other volume, so in this book they are fighting mostly FDR, the New Deal and Democratic crackpots. A sample editorial, "Who Are the Fascists Here?" (17 June 1942), states: "The left wing radicals who are promoting the state controled [sic] economy to endure after the war are Fascist in thought and act" (45). Typical of the two dozen cartoons by Carey Orr and Joseph Parrish is Orr's "Dictators on the Home Front," for 21 September 1943: Uncle Sam with his top hat askew is locked into stocks labeled "Regimentation of the American People." Twirling the key triumphantly and saying "Well, I've accomplished my main war objective" is the figure of the New Deal. A study in stereotypes, this figure has FDR's cigarette holder, the anarchist's wild hair; and the glasses, buck teeth and slanted eyes of the Japanese caricature so popular during the War (100).

The volume's final cartoon, "When He Comes Back," by Joseph Parrish for 16 January 1943, shows an angry GI carrying a flag as he breaks in the door of a building labeled "Washington, D.C." Jumping out windows and generally scurrying for cover are a dozen little figures identified by tags: "Draft Dodgers," "(Social) Career Diplomats," "Burocratic [sic} Bunglers," "Plotters against the Liberties for Which He Fought," "War Dep't Slackers," "Lame Duck Politicians," "Communists, Crack-Pots, and Cookie Pushers," "Cocktail Lounge Warriors," "Naval Intelligence Boys," "OWI Conspirators," and "Bright Young Punks" (154). The latter two, as executed by Parrish, have a decidedly Japanese cast to their faces, similar to the Orr's New Deal figure, above.

58. *Journalism Quarterly* 45 (1968): 724-726.

employed Fitzpatrick's and occasionally Edmund Duffy's illustrative drawings to reinforce editorials.

In a commercial use of editorial cartoons, Philco featured in its *Collier's* ads the work of various cartoonists, including C. G. Werner and W. H. Crawford. A representative one is "Next!" drawn by Dave Gerard for the 20 November 1943, *Colliers.* A tough GI has been nailing name plates on the door to "OBLIVION." To the names of Herod, Nero, Attila, Kaiser Wilhelm, and Mussolini he is about to add Hitler and Tojo. The diminutive dictators, half his height, look on in fright (10) Rube Goldberg's "Three Blind Rats! in *Collier's* 8 May 1943, shows the fierce Eagle of "U. S. Production" pursuing the usual suspects, portrayed as rats (10).

The ominous trend of all this verminizing of the enemy is apparent. Keen's section "The Enemy as Beast, Reptile, Insect, Germ" is subtitled: Sanctions for Extermination" (60). And John Dower notes: "What we are concerned with here is something different: the attachment of stupid, bestial, even pestilential subhuman caricatures on the enemy; and the manner in which this blocked seeing the foe as rational or even human, and facilitated mass killing. It is, at least for most people, easier to kill animals than fellow humans" (89).

America's allies, of course, fared better on the artists' drawing board. Orr's cartoon for 18 February 1942, was "Maybe We Ought to Take a Few lessons." Battered John Bull and Uncle Sam in lower right look up to large figures of soldiers labeled "Chinese Resistance" and "Russian Drive" and ask: "Would you boys mind tellin' us how you do it?" The Chinese soldier is portrayed positively, with slant eyes, pigtail, and native cap (not coolie-style), smiling. The Russian soldier, a friendly revision of the century-old Eastern European radical stereotype, has a bushy beard and a wide-eyed, amiable expression (50). In Bert Thomas's *Detroit News* Cartoon, "Cheese It! The Cop!" a British and a German soldier, each with one foot in his native land, attack one another with bayonets. Between them, on a tiny island labeled "Ireland," a diminutive police officer brandishes his nightstick and says: "One step on my beat and I'll run ye both in." Their helmets marked with swastika and Union Jack, the soldiers are ethnically distinguished: The British Tommy has curly hair, ruddy cheeks and a prominent Welsh nose. The German's nose is shorter and he is apparently grunting with effort, but the stereotype is not derogatory. The face of the little Irishman, however, is distinctly porcine.[59]

Contrary to its policy in World War I, the government decided early on not to meddle directly in the editorial cartoonists' business; that was not necessary. As noted above by Hess and Kaplan, the cartoonists' offerings were sufficiently bland without the guidance of a Bureau of Cartoons. Nevertheless, as with McCutcheon's "shot in the arm" cartoon described above, even the cartoonists put in an occasional good word — and picture — on behalf of at least

59. Carpentier and Scarcelli, 162.

modified freedom of information.[60] Appropriately, it was the cartoonist closest to the front who was the most realistic, the least gung-ho. In 1945, when he was twenty-three, Bill Mauldin became the youngest artist ever to win the Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Cartooning. The only caption to the winning cartoon is a quoted news item: "Fresh, spirited American troops, flushed with victory, are bringing in thousands of hungry-ragged, battle-weary prisoners." The drawing shows Willie, one of Mauldin's two famous GI's, slogging through the rain, his rifle slung under his shoulder (i.e.: not "at the ready"), beside two prisoners. All are equally bearded and worn, and Willie is anything but flushed with victory.

The ordinary GI's looked forward to Mauldin's irreverent cartoons in *Stars and Stripes*, and the artist was proud that General George S. Patton once told him he was "undermining the morale of the Army, destroying the confidence in the command [and] making soldiers unsoldierly."[61] Mauldin's experience at the front gave him the moral authority to draw such pictures, an authority denied to cartoonists on the home front.

Conclusions

The editorial cartoonists had the task of translating the overwhelming horrors of world war into everyday terms. If their symbols were hackneyed and clichéd, then that is a limitation of the medium. As the examples have shown, the editorial cartoons, like the comics evaluated by the Office of War Information, were generally simplistic, and appropriately so, because they were propaganda. Hess and Kaplan's characterization of World War I cartoonists as "cheerleaders" applies to those of World War II, as well.

Once the United States entered the war, these cartoons were not intended to change opinions, but served the purpose of unofficial propaganda. They were intended to deflate the enemy and provide relief from anxiety, while reinforcing the citizens' sense of superiority and security. Both the positive and negative aspects of editorial cartooning came into play, rewarding friends [clean-cut American lads and lasses in uniform, sturdy Brits, Russians (not Reds) and Hollanders] and punishing enemies (loutish krauts, comical spaghetti-eaters, and simian Japs). No elaborate governmental apparatus was required, just publishers, editors, and cartoonists doing their part. The cartoons and caricatures were effective because they spoke to the people in familiar, everyday terms: sports, old saws, and allusions.

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60. Orr drew "It Is Dangerous to Close the Blind Entirely" on 26 March 1942. Uncle Sam, holding a rifle ("Alert Nation at the Ready"), has closed the window blind of "War Censorship —Carefully Administered" part way, to observe the club-wielding barbarian looming outside. "I must be able to see out — without letting the enemy see in," Uncle Sam says. In the corner is a quotation from Gen. Douglas MacArthur on censorship: "*Silence* will begin to react against you. It, therefore, is a crime" (67).

61. Hess and Kaplan, 22.

Some Americans feel a certain guilty nostalgia for the days of swing music and Uncle Sam war bond posters, when the nation's problems could be summed up by caricatures of Hitler, Tojo, and Mussolini. And the cartoonists provided solace with their amusing drawings belittling monsters and mass-murderers, by going, in the words of a popular song, "Heil, phhht! Heil, phhht! right in the Führer's face!"[62]

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62. Spike Jones and His City Slickers, *Thank You, Music Lovers*, RCA LPM#2224.

Research Essay:

Legacy of Fear: Japan-Bashing in Contemporary American Film

By Jan Whitt

History is often an experiment in vantage point. American high school students study the 7 December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, while American journalists localize the event for each anniversary of the bombing. In the "Land of the Rising Sun," Japanese students and journalists focus instead on the 1945 bombings that killed between 70,000 and 80,000 in Hiroshima and 40,000 more in Nagasaki.

In a column about Michael Crichton's Japanese-bashing 1992 bestseller *Rising Sun*, George F. Will says of the novelist, "He should write less fiction until he has read more history."[1] On the other hand, Japanese war historians battle what they call "deep-rooted historical amnesia."[2]

When Japan's parliament marked the fiftieth anniversary of Pearl Harbor in 1991, they expressed regret for Japanese aggression during World War II, but did not apologize for Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. On the forty-sixth anniversary of the 6 August 1945 bombing of his city, Hiroshima Mayor Takashi Hiraoka offered an apology for the hardships Japan caused its Asian and Pacific neighbors, but not its Western one. In the United States during the same year, former President George Bush said he would not apologize for the bombings of Nagasaki or Hiroshima.

These political maneuverings, filled with connotations, implications, and omissions, are fodder for historians, journalists, and others as they continue to sift through the legacy of World War II. George Friedman, professor of governmental affairs at American University, believes that Japan and the U.S. are on a "collision course." His book, *The Coming War With Japan*, was a

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1. George F. Will, "Shadow World?" *Newsweek*, 4 May 1992, 82.
2. Bob Deans, "Remembering the War Japan Forgot," *Denver Post*, 1 December 1991.

1991 bestseller in Japan. Friedman said in a 1992 speech that "The war [between the U.S. and Japan] will not arise out of wickedness. It will not arise because of a lack of mutual understanding or because of cultural differences. It will arise because both nations are living in a selfish, dangerous world. Each wants what the other cannot give."[3]

Evidence of the tension that exists more than fifty years after the end of World War II remains:

- In 1991, David Duke of Louisiana, former grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan and contender for the Republican presidential nomination, discussed economic competition between the U.S. and Japan by saying scornfully, "We must go to the Japanese and say, 'You no buy our rice, we no buy your cars.' "[4]
- In 1992 Senator Ernest Hollings (D.-S.C.) told factory workers in his home state that they "should draw a mushroom cloud and put underneath it: 'Made in America by lazy and illiterate Americans and tested in Japan.' " (He was retaliating against comments made earlier by Japanese Parliament Speaker Yoshio Sakurauchi, who said U.S. workers are lazy, unproductive, and illiterate. Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa added fuel to the fire two weeks later when he was quoted as saying that Americans lack a work ethic.) Criticized for his comments, the senator said he was not Japan-bashing but was simply standing up for American workers.[5]
- At the top of Japan's fist of America-bashers is the author of *The Japan that Can* Really *Say No,* Shintaro Ishihara. The ultranationalist member of the Japanese Parliament and best-selling author believes the United States should quit pretending to be the world's only superpower. He criticizes the United States for misrepresenting its weak economy and for responding poorly during the Gulf War.[6]
- Another critic of America is Toshiro Ishido, a popular scriptwriter, who says, "I have nothing but contempt for America."[7] And novelist Akiyuki Nosaka says looking at the United States is like watching a "test run for the decline of the human race."[8]

Antagonism between the countries festers, and it is nowhere more visible than in American popular culture. Films as varied as "Gung Ho" (1986), "Karate Kid II" (1986), "Black Rain" (1989), "Pacific Heights" (1990), "Ski Patrol" (1990), and "Rising Sun" (1993) belittle the Japanese and reveal a

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3. Linda Allen, "Japan vs. U.S.: Author Predicts World War," *Campus Press,* 16 November 1991, 2.
4. "Duke Vying for Presidency," *Denver Post,* 5 December 1991.
5. "Senator Says A-bomb Joke Not Really Japan-Bashing," *Denver Post,* 4 March 1992.
6. Bill Powell and Hideko Takayama, "A Japan That Can Take Credit," *Newsweek,* 15 July 1991.
7. Leslie Helm, "America-Bashing Picks up Steam in Japan," *Denver Post,* 26 October 1991.
8. Ibid.

renewed fear of them since their emergence as an economic power. Even "Come See The Paradise" (1991) — a sensitive story of three generations of Japanese Americans during a time of international horror and despair — is told through the eyes of a white male hero.

According to Eugene Franklin Wong, American filmmakers depict the Japanese as the most aggressive group of Asians and overemphasize the "big-power expectations"[9] of Japan. In his book on Asians in American film, Wong says portrayals of Japanese and other Asians are usually negative and include erotic scenes between white males and Asian females (rarely between Asian males and white females). Asians are depicted as heathens and as expendable soldiers and laborers.

During World War II, 112,000 Japanese Americans were sent to "relocation centers," prison camps with armed guards and barbed wire fences. They were not officially charged with any crime and were not freed until 1944. The effect of the relocation camps on Japanese Americans is analyzed in "Come See the Paradise," written and directed by Alan Parker ("Mississippi Burning").

The film begins in Brooklyn and shifts to Little Tokyo in Los Angeles in 1936. The film stars Dennis Quaid as Jack McGurn, a projectionist working in a Japanese theater. Jack falls in love with Lily Kawamura (Tamlyn Tomita), whose father runs the theater. During their first awkward moments together, Jack discovers the effect of U.S. policies governing citizenship. Lily tells him that her father is not allowed to own his business ("He's Japanese. It's against the law."), and Jack asks if it's because he never became a citizen. Lily tells him that, too, is against the law. "I didn't know that," Jack says. Lily responds, "Not many people do."

Jack and Lily marry in Seattle, since Japanese are not allowed to marry non-Japanese in California. Told in flashback, "Come See the Paradise" juxtaposes the American land of plenty with the deprivation and sadness of Jack and Lily's child. Affectionately called "Mini" (played early in the film by Elizabeth Gilliam), the child struggles to live as half-Japanese, half-Anglo in a nation at war with her grandparents' homeland.

Recently, the fear of Japanese economic dominance has begun to be depicted in television and film. Angry at what they consider the separatism, superiority, nationalism, and wealth of the Japanese, Americans have protested Japan's failure to pay enough for the Gulf War; have protested the Japanese purchase of ski resorts, golf courses in Arizona and Hawaii, and tourist concessions in Yosemite National Park; and have ridiculed Japanese dominance in the automobile market.

In a 1990 *Newsweek* article entitled "Japan Circles the Wagons / Detroit's family-car franchise is under attack," reporters Frank Washington and Bill Powell claim that the "rollout" of family-size autos from Japan "is but the latest in the unprecedented blitz of new models coming from the Japanese

9. Eugene Franklin Wong, *On Visual Media Racism: Asians in the American Motion Pictures* (New York: Arno Press, 1978), xx.

automakers, placing excruciating competitive pressure on Detroit's Big Three at a time when the American market is contracting." The article continues:

> There is no longer any place for Detroit to hide. Japanese manufacturers, once known only for their small, sprightly gas tipplers, are now a force in virtually every segment of the U.S. auto market. "They have come full circle," says Chris Cedergren, an analyst with J.D. Power in Agoura Hills, California. "The Japanese have moved dramatically upscale with their product lines, while keeping a major presence at the entry level."
> . . . the reality for Detroit is that there is not a market segment at which the Japanese companies have taken aim and seriously misfired. And the new models like the Accord wagon are aimed straight for the heart.[10]

When "Gung Ho" appeared, the Japanese economy was vibrant, largely because of its successful auto industry. In the film, Japanese and American cultural philosophies explode in the most incendiary arena of all: an automobile factory in Hadleyville, Pennsylvania. The Japanese buy the faltering American company and plan to increase production drastically in the first year. But before the Assan Motors American Division can improve, the Japanese must learn respect for individuality (a worker's need for family, leisure, etc.), and the Americans must learn to sacrifice personal desire for the good of the company.

Throughout "Gung Ho," American workers ridicule chopsticks, group exercise, meditation, personal cleanliness, and Japanese food. They call the Japanese the "Rice-a-Roni Patrol," "Yokahama Mamas," and the "whalekillers," and one American worker spits out a seaweed snack in his boss' office when he understands what it is.

Japanese management wants each person to feel responsible for the product and to be able to conduct a variety of jobs; the Americans want to specialize and are interested in individual benefits and salaries. When Hunt Stevenson (Michael Keaton) suggests to a Japanese supervisor that he "just put everybody back where they belong," one of Stevenson's friends, Buster (George Wendt), snaps, "He belongs in Japan." In one scene, a Japanese manager finds a defect in a car and is horrified:

> American worker: "Oh, that's something for the dealer to worry about. You know, every car can't be perfect."
> Japanese boss: "In Japan, if there is defect, worker is ashamed. He stays night to fix. In Japan, our goal is 0 percent defect."
> American worker: "How'd you slip by?"

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10. Frank Washington and Bill Powell, "Japan Circles the Wagons," *Newsweek,* 24 December 1990, 44.

The Japanese workers, whose English sounds like that of the Native Americans ridiculed in early westerns, respond in kind. When a wheel rolls off a car model in a design meeting, the Japanese laugh and say, "American car."

To no one's surprise, Assan Motors begins to fail in Hadleyville, and the racial hatred affects everyone where it hurts most: financially. The Japanese threaten to shut down the plant unless American workers can rally and produce 15,000 automobiles in record time. In a speech to his fellow autoworkers, Stevenson says that the American workers don't want the truth — they want only to think they're the best. "The great American do-or-die spirit! But they've got it," he says of the Japanese. What follows is the production of 14,994 cars, a renewed contract for Assan Motors, and a mutual respect that the American viewer is led to believe will prevail in years to come.

Although the 1986 film is an important statement about the need for the Japanese and American workers to learn from one another, the goal is profits, not mutual understanding, and most of the comic moments in the film are at the expense of the Japanese. After all, the target movie audience is American, and the chopsticks, seaweed, and broken English of the Japanese arrogantly buying American companies are accepted objects of ridicule.

Some American films such as "Ski Patrol" and "Pacific Heights" introduce the Japanese only as peripheral characters, good for a laugh in segments infused with racist stereotypes. Others, like "Black Rain," however, rely upon exaggerated Japanese-American conflict.

In the film, two American policemen go to Japan and teach the Tokyo police department how to catch criminals and how to show humility. Once again, although the attitudes of the Americans change minimally in the film (Nick, a character played by Michael Douglas, develops a friendship with a Japanese policeman), the comic moments in the suspense drama are bought at the expense of the Japanese: "I just hope we have a Nip in this building who speaks . . . English," says Nick. The line is designed to draw immediate and sustained applause and laughter from the audience, an audience that is ready to see Nick stir things up in true "Terminator" style.

Nick and Charlie (Andy Garcia) are members of the New York Police Department chosen to escort a member of the Japanese mafia (called "Yahuza") to Osaka for trial. Even though Nick and Charlie are in Japan because they accidentally release their prisoner, the Japanese are portrayed as more inept and foolish than they. Even the Japanese policeman who befriends Nick and ultimately helps him confront the Japanese mafia is shown to be inferior. He ultimately thanks Nick for having taught him how to launch out on his own in solving a case without fear of his superiors.

The theme of "Black Rain" is not that the best of both worlds mesh and allow the police to accomplish their task. The message is that even the worst in one American (arrogance, boorishness, disrespect for differences, and ignorance of other cultural values) can transform an inferior investigative system peopled by inferior people.

Fortunately, another film in 1986 does a better job of focusing on the community spirit, self-sacrifice, and quiet understanding of the culture it depicts.

In spite of its enslavement to stereotypes, "Karate Kid II" emphasizes the tradition, reverence for one's elders, forgiveness, and deep love as elements of Japanese culture worth imitating.

The most poignant analysis of the cost of cultural misunderstanding and competition comes when Miyagi (Noriyuki Morita) and Daniel (Ralph Macchio) travel to Okinawa. Daniel says pensively of the war, "It must have been terrible here, fifteen thousand Americans killed in . . . 10 days." Miyagi responds quietly, "Yeah. And 150,000 Okinawan and Japanese. Why are we all so stupid?"

No such cinematic insight occurs in the most recent film in this study, "Rising Sun" (1993). Michael Crichton's 1992 bestseller by the same name was a "paranoid polemic masquerading as a murder mystery," said David Ansen of *Newsweek.* He adds:

> The polemic — an alarmist wake-up call warning America that we are losing the business war with Japan — had an unfortunate tendency to turn the Japanese into an omnipotent, ominous, and faceless "they." Crichton's portrait of these shadowy power brokers, secretly pulling the strings of virtually every American institution, indulged in sweeping racial generalizations.[11]

George F. Will joined the crusade against the novel in 1992 when he wrote that it "overflows with anti-Japanese passion, a peculiar blend of fear and loathing and admiration." Will notes that the film *Rising Sun* is "not a harmless cartoon." He says, "We have seen such stuff before, with Jews treated as the Japanese now are." Of popular portrayals of the Jews and the Japanese, Will writes, "They wield power behind impenetrable mists of subterfuge, manipulating the media and financial institutions, and controlling, like marionettes on wings of money, corrupted politicians and pliable intellectuals."[12]

Other critics such as Ralph Novak of *People,* claim that Crichton's novel was "'falsely condemned" as Japan-bashing and that the film is a "model of equanimity," barring what Novak calls the references to "Japanese men's predilection for tall, blond American women."[13] Novak fails to note the good guy/bad guy divisions, with John Conner (Sean Connery) and his sidekick Web Smith (Wesley Snipes) as the heroes and with Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa (Eddie Sakamura) as the militant, arrogant, immoral culprit.

The effects of popular culture often are not as direct as the battery of shootings and assaults that followed the release of the film "Boyz N the Hood" in 1991, or the child who set fire to his home after watching "Beavis and

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11. David Ansen, "Cross-Cultural Crime Story: Sean and Wesley vs. Japan, Inc.," *Newsweek,* 2 August 1993, 55.
12. Will, "Shadow World?"
13. Ralph Novak, "Rising Sun," *People,* 2 August 1993, 17.

Butthead" in 1993, or the teens who lay in the middle of the street to imitate a scene from "The Program" in 1993. But the reinforcement of the stereotypes of the Japanese — as people who move only when told to, who worship the Organization, who deprive their families and friends of affection and time, who speak English poorly, and who remain committed to economic takeover — can only further alienate the cultures.

Misunderstandings and mistrust are inevitable in a culture struggling to come to terms with the vestiges of World War II, the changing economic picture, and the profound differences between the two worlds. Films such as "Come See the Paradise" and "Karate Kid II" are attempts to portray Japanese culture honestly, but they are only a flawed beginning. Filmmakers must learn the lesson of "Karate Kid II," in which actor Noriyuki (Pat) Morita says: "Never stop war by taking part in one."

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American Journalism Book Reviews

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David Abrahamson, *Magazine-Made America: The Cultural Transformation of the Postwar Periodical.* Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press, 1996. 128 pp. Cloth, $39.50. Paper, $17.95.

After reading David Abrahamson's new book, *Magazine-Made America: The Cultural Transformation of the Postwar Periodical*, I now know why, in the 1960s, my father dropped the family subscription to *Life* magazine and subscribed to *Roller Digest* in its place. My father was a pigeon fancier and breeder who specialized in a bird called a roller, which periodically left its airborne flock to do a series of barrel rolls in the sky. After raising a national champion roller 1966, my father was the kind of subscriber (and occasional contributor) sought out by *Roller Digest*, surely one of the most specialized of the specialty magazines that grew up in the postwar period.

Abrahamson, a professor at Northwestern University and a leader in magazine scholarship, has written an engaging, well-informed and informative cultural history of the emergence of the special-interest magazine during the 1960s. In seven chapters, Abrahamson, a former journalist for *Car & Driver*, details the American postwar transformation and how general interest magazines reflected and reinforced dominant values in the 1950s; the demise of those magazines in the '60s, and the rise of the special-interest periodicals among external social forces. He also explores the new magazines' conceptual formulas concerning editorial tone, form and content.

The emergence of the magazines, according to the author, was both a product of and contributor to major sociocultural changes in America. Abrahamson argues that three existing models of magazine structure and function fail to include larger social forces and smaller operational considerations, such as industry norms. In this concise book, he remedies those gaps in a discussion about television, advertising, American values, leisure time, and the decline of *Life*, *Look*, and other general interest magazines, and the rise of the likes of *Boating*, *Car & Driver*, and *Golf Digest*.

The author sees the 1960s as important not in the usual protest-period analysis, but as a time when personal freedom and self-fulfillment replaced "traditional" communal values. Leisure accomplishments, such as raising a national champion pigeon, came to define one's social station. Many of the leisure pursuits — tennis, golf, yachting — did have strong communitarian aspects, which may have formed the basis of their appeal as well as a substitute for more conventional "small-town" communities. "In this context, the special-interest magazines may have served [as] not only the small town's newspaper, but as both an essential element in the coherence and an important validator of these communities' very existence." (50)

One of the concerns of journalism critics is the relationship between editorial and advertising departments at specialty publications. Abrahamson examines the "fan mentality" of writers not trained as journalists, and the tension between departments on stories such as product evaluations, but rejects the idea that most of the major publications succumbed to pressure from advertisers.

This study of how mass media and social change are connected makes this a significant book for journalism historians, aviculturists, and others interested in the postwar period.

Mark Neuzil, University of St. Thomas.

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Elliott Caplin, *Al Capp Remembered.* Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1994. 148 pp. Cloth, $21.95. Paper, $10.95.

Al Capp Remembered is not a biography of the cartoonist who created the comic strip "Li'l Abner." Rather, his brother, Elliott Caplin, records a series of family vignettes in which his older brother figures prominently. The twenty-nine short stories that make up this collection are augmented by family photographs and a series of pin-ups of the characters from Capp's strips. Readers expecting to find an analysis of Capp's work or a discussion of the events in Capp's life that had the most influence on the artist he became will be disappointed. As the author states in the book's preface, "These stories are about happenings in our family as I remember them."

As memories, these happenings are presented in a somewhat fragmented way. For example, the account of how Capp lost his leg in a trolley accident when he was nine years old is scattered through several of the pieces in the book, and readers must finish the book for a complete account. The loss had a tremendous impact on the young Capp. Being unable to participate in sports and other activities undoubtedly fostered his passion for reading and his interest in studying art. But Caplin never discusses the ramifications of the loss. Instead, he remembers when, as a five-year-old boy staying in the country with his mother and siblings to recover from the mumps, his mother got the bad news in a phone call. He recalls throwing up in the hospital hallway after seeing his brother for the first time after the accident. And he remembers the struggles of ten-year-old Al as he learned to walk with a wooden leg.

*Al Capp Remembered*s as much a story about Elliott Caplin's life as it is about Al Capp. One of the more harrowing tales is that of a mentally ill man who stalked Caplin's family because the man believed that his resemblance to Li'l Abner had ruined his life. Then, as now, there was little police could do unless the mysterious Bennett Harper acted on his threats. Finally, when Harper threatened the secretary of the treasury, claiming he owned the gold in Fort Knox, police were able to lock him up. Caplin concludes, "To this day I study with nervous intensity approaching strangers."

Caplin also remembers a deal his brother tried to work out in which the two would write a comic strip and noted illustrator Norman Rockwell would provide the art. The brothers created the concept of "Broadway Bill," a country boy who made it to the big city but never lost his rural charm. Despite greeting the idea with initial enthusiasm, Rockwell backed out of the arrangements,

telling Caplin, "I couldn't possibly draw your comic strip." Caplin, counting on the income to purchase a house, recalls being much more disappointed than his famous older brother.

There are other tantalizing glimpses into the life of artist Al Capp. Caplin gives his brother's version of the long-standing feud between Capp and Ham Fisher; he offers a description of the studio where Capp and his assistants labored to produce "Li'l Abner"; he hints at the strained relationship between Capp and his syndicate, United Features; and he devotes one segment to what was perceived as Capp's swing from liberal to conservative politically and the use of his strip to attack liberals such as Ted Kennedy and Joan Baez. These bits and pieces of Capp's career, however, have to be teased out of Caplin's accounts. Why didn't Caplin write a biography? He provides the answer himself:

> A dedicated biographer would be obliged to study and analyze the writings and drawings to find some clue to his personality traits or his social facade. That dictates a studious perusal of well over 100,000 drawings that Al Capp produced in his lifetime. And the biographer would have to immerse himself in multitudes of plots that varied from raucous criticism of status quo to idyllic liaisons between boy and girl.

When Capp announced his retirement in 1977, several publishers were eager for his life story. Capp initially said he wasn't interested in writing it himself. Several other writers were approached, but Capp was not able to find a suitable collaborator. He finally undertook the project himself, producing a seventy-four-page autobiography, never completed, that Caplin read. He concluded, "Nowhere in the seventy-odd pages did I find the man I knew." Caplin eventually wrote about the man he knew, but he leaves the reader with the impression he knows a lot more than he's willing to tell.

Amy Kiste Nyberg, Seton Hall University

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Stanley Cloud and Lynne Olson, *The Murrow Boys*. Boston, Mass: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1996. 448 pp. Cloth, $27.95.

Cloud and Olson have written a history that sorts out Edward R.Murrow's surrounding cast of characters and evokes a sense of his pioneering era of broadcast news. The book is one that can connect students of journalism history to a rich tradition and even to themselves. "The Boys" were young men, and one woman, who were smart and adventuresome and who put themselves in positions to be tested — intellectually and physically — much as today's young men and women want to be tested and confirmed in their ability to make it in the business and fit in with peers and superiors.

The authors introduce readers to a galaxy of reporter stars and trace their orbits around Murrow. Some of the Boys drew ever nearer; some spun out on new paths of their own. This book does a good job of situating each character while linking lives and themes. Cloud and Olson give the reader a sense of these people: the inner circle made up in the early years of Larry LeSeur, William Shirer, Charles Collingwood, Howard K. Smith, Eric Severeid, Bill Downs, Cecil Brown, Winston Burdett, Richard Hottelet, and Mary Marvin Breckinridge. The book traces their rise (and for some their fall) while painting a picture of what, for many, was the central relationship of their lives: Edward R. Murrow.

The personal stories are evocative and the backdrop of the thirties and forties moves across the reader's mind as clearly as a documentary film: the blitz of London, the mud of Italy, the tropics of Burma, the smoke and booze filled New York apartment of Ed and Janet Murrow.

The book has a complete index, useful notes, and a folio of photographs, enhancing an already good book that has story, character, and complication. The authors report the infancy of broadcast news, the sometimes less than admirable management from New York, the dismissive attitudes about women in journalism, the predilection for good voices and style over content by CBS headquarters. Murrow, though not the central character but central to all the characters, is seen in a refracted light. His greatest strength was his fearlessness in surrounding himself with brilliant talent. He seems not to have been threatened by or intimidated by his creative ensemble cast. Quite the contrary: he reveled in their ability and success. Cloud and Olson also reveal a Murrow that knew how to play the corporate political game, how to test his new recruits, and how to manipulate their egos, aspirations, and insecurities.

The well-educated journalist, the notion of the scholar-journalist, is a subtext that comes through and should certainly resonate with those working in the academy, as well as all those concerned about the current directions in media reporting and news. The Boys themselves, and the Boys as book, will appeal to today's students. The Boys were not only "techie" pioneers for a new medium (radio), they were first well versed in history, politics, and culture. Next, they were aggressive reporters and good writers; some like Severeid were great writers. They worked hard, played hard, overcame difficulties, and battled their own insecurities. These legends of broadcast news come alive as human beings first, not just hall of fame celebrities.

Ultimately readers may come away dazzled and dismayed at the ego, willfulness, self-absorption and self-destruction of these men. Most died from lung cancer, no doubt the result of lifetimes of heavy smoking and alcohol consumption. The lingering question might be what happened that these Boys, brave pioneers of radio reporting, couldn't do for television news what they had done for wartime radio. Was it the war that made it all so different? Was it television itself? Or was it a society that was moving forward and unwilling to look back? A society that wanted to forget the pain and embrace something more entertaining? Or was it the greed of Bill Paley? What might have happened had the Murrow Boys been less backward turning and acted as unbridled in their spirit of adventure with television as they had with radio?

They certainly did not look backward when they signed on with Murrow. The Murrow Boys came of age together. Their character had been forged by terrible times and terrifying experiences. These experiences and the Boys' connection to Murrow, if not to one another, left them a unit. It is easy to understand why they dwelled in their shared past. Their individual and collective identity lay in that past. But dwelling in that past turned them into an exclusive enclave, a bit snobbish at times, jockeying for celebrity status, sometimes guilty of arrogance. Even Walter Cronkite, the authors report, did not measure up to the Boys' standards. Yet they gave so much and continue to inspire. They represent the best that journalism might be when it reaches for the stars.

Sharon M. W. Bass, University of Kansas

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Blanche Cooney, *In My Own Sweet Time: An Autobiography.* Athens, Ohio: Swallow Press, 1993. 280 pp. Cloth, $24.95.

The Phoenix, a literary journal published intermittently between 1938-1984, was a pioneering publication that championed and often anticipated the thought, the literature, and the life styles that would become dear to the hearts of at least two generations of American radicals. Blanche Cooney, who published *The Phoenix* with her husband Jimmy, has written a history that contains both a chronicle of this idealistic publication and the story of the lives of the incomparable idealists who published it.

The portrait Blanche Cooney provides in this book of her husband, Jimmy Cooney, includes in a single character the embodiment of many of the themes of radical thought, including its contradictions, that spanned a fifty-year period of American history known for the brilliance of its radical movements and the publications they inspired. Perhaps most significantly, *The Phoenix* and the Cooneys represent a rare bridge between two of the richest radical movements in American history — the socialist movement of the 1930s and the peace movement of the 1960s. The book's descriptions of these two periods provide a comparison between the times that should be useful to historians of the radical press of the period, despite its emphasis on the personal lives of the Cooneys and the exclusion of a systematic analysis of the political and literary thought that inspired them.

The Phoenix began its life in 1937 in an artist's colony called "The Maverick" in Woodstock, New York. Blanche, the daughter of a Jewish gangster who had grown up in the Bronx, and Jimmy, the son of an Irish family from Long Island, had recently married. Although Jimmy fought with all the other radicals in Woodstock — the Stalinists, the Trotskyites, the Anarchists — he developed a political philosophy that borrowed from all of them. He came to believe that the best hope for radical American intellectuals like himself was for them to form small, self-sufficient agrarian communities dedicated to pacifism,

communes with shared land, dwellings, and stock. These communities would be sustained and popularized by publications, like *The Phoenix*, that would publish writers and essayists who had been shunned by the popular press because their views were too radical. This hope actually became the guiding principle for Jimmy and Blanche for the rest of *The Phoenix's* existance and Jimmy's life, both of which ended on an "agrarian community" in western Massachusetts in 1985. The difference between the Cooney's idealism and that of so many other radicals of the period was that the Cooneys actually tried to live their dream for nearly fifty years.

True to the plan, *The Phoenix* was first to publish the work of the heavily censored Henry Miller in the United States. Miller served as the magazine's European editor at its inception, and he found other contributors from among his huge assortment of acquaintances such as Anaïs Nin, excerpts of whose *Diary* also appeared first in this country in *The Phoenix*. The magazine published other then-obscure writers such as Robert Duncan, Jean Giono, Michael Frankel, and Kay Boyle. *The Phoenix* advocated the creation of agrarian communes for artists in the late 1930s and railed against conscription and war after the beginning of World War II. Perhaps, the journal's lasting importance to historians lies in the fact that it championed the same causes in 1970 when such sentiments had become the central themes for a completely new generation of radical publications.

This case history of stubborn radicalism may also make the book's major subject, Blanche's story of the Cooney's life and times, a relevant artifact for historians to study. The Cooney's forty-year attempt to create an agrarian commune of artist-farmers in western Massachusetts, written in Blanche's spare, accessible, and remarkably unsentimental style, certainly places *The Phoenix's* dogmatic ideology in a context that demands attention. The Cooneys bought the land that became Morning Star Farm in West Whately, Massachusetts, in 1943 and much of the latter half of the book is devoted to their efforts to realize their vision, an effort that ended only with Jimmy's death in 1985. The portrait that emerges of these genuinely American pamphleteers and the manner in which they dedicated their hardscrabble lives to radical idealism more than compensates for the lack of an intellectual history of their thought.

Paul S. Belgrade, Millersville University

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Anne Cooper-Chen, *Games in the Global Village: A 50-nation Study of Entertainment Television.* Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1994. 319 pp. Cloth, $36.95. Paper, $15.95.

The premise underlying the book *Games in the Global Village: A 50-Nation Study of Entertainment Television* is that we can learn more about a society's values and conditions by watching its TV game shows than by

watching its TV news. Given that the book's author, Anne Cooper-Chen, is director of the Center for International Journalism at Ohio University, one might have expected this book to privilege the news side of the cultural indicator equation. While you might argue the validity of that basic proposition, after reading this 1994 book published by Bowling Green State University Popular Press, you'll certainly know more about the wide variety of TV game show formats available globally. In short, Cooper-Chen's book is an ambitious report of a study that gathered information on more than 250 game shows world wide.

The book is the product of an idea planted in the author's mind after viewing a 1985 Entertainment Tonight segment "superficially comparing" game shows in various countries. While the author's data collection technique was ingenious, in that more than seventy-five monitors filled out coding sheets about 260 programs in fifty countries, the book itself is largely descriptive, with precious little analysis, leaving the book, like its ET progenitor, somewhat superficial. For instance, the author seems to delight in presenting content that varies widely from standard U.S. game show fare. Many examples are cited as oddities, such as the half-hour segment on a Japanese game show in which three men ate hot noodles while the camera filmed bottles filling up with their perspiration; or the segment on Colpo Grosso, which airs in Italy and at least five other countries in which players guess whether or not one of the eight "Cin cin girl" assistants has a tattoo on her breast — prior to the assistant graphically displaying the answer. While this type of content certainly varies from U.S. game show fare, and thus, makes for enjoyable and memorable reading, unfortunately, Cooper-Chen does not offer much commentary on the social or cultural values or conditions she thinks are being disclosed. In what is arguably the strongest section of the book, a series of seven national case studies (discussing game shows in England, France, Tunisia, Nigeria, ROC/Taiwan, Japan, and Brazil) the reader is given a more in-depth look at programming patterns in specific countries, although there is precious little commentary on cultural values that create a market for varying game shows formats.

Perhaps with skilled editing this book could be strengthened. It opens tediously, with three sketchy chapters on mass entertainment theory, theories of international mass communication, and play theory. Lacking inadequate theoretical discussion, these chapters attempt to cover far too much ground and consequently have a cut-and-paste quality. Finally, after more than 100 pages, Cooper-Chen begins to report data on 260 game shows from around the globe, and things pick up considerably. Emerging trends in U.S. game shows are identified, although here again there is varying level of analytical detail. For instance, the book reports that the gambling motif left U.S. airwaves by 1993, but doesn't comment on *why* this occurred, especially perplexing in light of other indications that casinos and lotteries were gaining in popularity nationally.

The concluding chapter is generally strong, with its emphasis on gigantic cross-border games and "cultural continents." The later section paints a broad global typology of game show programming based upon a global typology of Western, Latin, East Asian, and Equatorial patterns of cross-border

similarity in TV game shows. Also well developed in the conclusion is the concept of the development potential of "enter-education" as opposed to infotainment. Less well covered in the conclusion is final section on "the future," which causes the book to end on something of a sour note as it deals exclusively (and superficially) with dating games and striptease formats. Overall, the greatest strength of the book lies in its coverage of gender differences in TV games globally, and in the use of a typology of six objective categories (schedule placement, program duration, use of celebrity panelists, gender of host, format origin, and mode of play — meaning interactive, spectator, knowledge, or mix format mode). Two qualitative dimensions, pacing and tolerance for sentimentality, were also subjectively determined and employed by the author. This typology gives a sense of coherence to the massive amount of programming and the large number of nations the book attempts to organize.

Still, many of the flaws in the book could have been quite easily corrected. Key data are underanalyzed, at times over reported — or worse yet, even rereported (why is Don Browne's definition of the term "mass entertainment medium" quoted on page thirty-one and then repeated verbatim on the very next page? This is just sloppy editing!). On the overreporting side, Cooper-Chen devotes more than seven pages to NBC Saturday Night Live parodies of game shows, and five-plus pages to a table offering only basic TV Guide-type listings of game shows on U.S. television in 1988, 1990 and 1992. Other editorial oddities abound, such as the disorientation I felt when, in the middle of several sections of contemporary data, the author doubles back to a history of games shows in the United States. One questions why the author chose to include some ratings data that were ten years old at the time of publication. Toss in over fifty pages of front material, illustrations, and appendices, and the real "meat" of this book really boils down to only about a third of the 300-plus page package. Not that the meat isn't worth it, but this reader tired of what seemed like filler. Curiously, because *Games in the Global Village: A 50-Nation Study of Entertainment Television* is heavy on the *what* and short on the *why*, readers will probably not gain a greater understanding of cultural similarities and differences which, Cooper-Chen claims lies at the heart of this book. Nonetheless, the book contains enough descriptive information on entertainment television from an international perspective to make it avaluable addition to your personal bookshelf or university library collection.

Mark Braun, Gustavus Adolphus College

Robert W. Crandall and Leonard Waverman, *TALK IS CHEAP: The Promise of Regulatory Reform in North American Telecommunications*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1995. 224 pp. Cloth, $36.95. Paper, $18.95.

Not so long ago, the mere mention of telephone regulation and rate structures would have caused the eyeballs of much of the public to glaze as eyelids drooped; the subject was on a par with chartered accountancy — of intense interest to a few but of little to most. This is no longer true; although the change has, in fact, been incremental, it has seemed dramatic in the manner of a j-curve. Beginning with the reformation of AT&T, and continuing with the ruling in favor of MCI, what had seemed as one of the verities of economic life in the United States became fraught with alternatives. As the very idea of choices in telephone service came to public consciousness, aided by advertising blitzes and dinner-hour promotional calls, so did options in other aspects of regulation, including the political idea of deregulation. Add to this the development of other methods of service, such as cellular and the Internet, and suddenly interest in the value and approaches of telephone regulation is strong indeed.

In response, Robert Crandall, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, and Leonard Waverman, an economics professor at the University of Toronto, have taken a binational approach in examining the past and current state of regulation of telephony in the United States and Canada, and offer some suggestions for future directions. As one would expect from economists, the focus is on rate structures, costs, subsidies, and economic benefits, rather than social, political, or engineering developments. The book's eight chapters begin with an overview of the telephone industries of Canada and the United States. Although short on discussion of how and why the telephone industry, along with its regulation, arrived at the present state, that current state is laid out fairly clearly.

The authors provide a useful — and, for the relatively unsophisticated reader, necessary — explanation of the present organization of the various constituents of the industry. They also provide definitions and explanations of the many technical concepts and terms used throughout the book, such as ISDN, RBOC, LATA, and Interactive Switched Video. Beginning with chapter three, the discussion turns quite technical as the authors delve into the formulae of rates and cost structures, with accompanying charts and graphs. By chapter five, which analyzes competition in the long distance market, readers might wish they had paid more attention in calculus. Fortunately, the more arcane material has been relegated to Appendices A and B and can be safely ignored by the general reader. Chapter six takes up Intra-State/Provincial rate structures in a similar manner; chapters seven and eight discuss competition from other technologies and the Information Superhighway in the less technical manner of the first two chapters.

The authors' concern throughout is providing the widest possible access to service at the lowest possible cost to the consumer as efficiently as possible.

Their essential argument is that these goals are best attained by promoting competition among carriers and minimizing regulation inhibiting it. This is an unsurprising approach from economists, but is is well presented, and supported by charts, graphs, and calculations. That alone would make it useful, but the book's value extends beyond these features because it enables the bewildered among us to gain an adequate basis to enter the debate. And enter it many have. The debate over the form and need for regulation is ongoing and heavy, at the offices of regulators and legislators and among the public on the Internet. The Telecom Regulations newsgroup, for example, has a continual discussion of rate structures, "universal" access to service, competition among service providers, and various mergers, agreements, and tie-ins.

Through the Internet, regulatory agencies can and do receive commentary directly from the public, just as they always have from corporations. Prior to the passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Congress was subject to heavy lobbying by the public, not just the communications industry, in regard to rates and structure — an unusual phenomenon. Even though the goal of deregulation is already fairly well set, the devil is in the details. When one's local service provider charges over one hundred dollars per month for ISDN use that can be obtained elsewhere for thirty dollars, or one is confronted with a bundle of unwanted services, this book will provide a means of saying more than "I object!"

Jack Colldeweih, Fairleigh Dickinson University

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Robert Ficken, *Rufus Woods, The Columbia River, & the Building of Modern Washington.* Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1995. 316 pp. Paper, $25.

The story of Rufus Woods is a compelling weaving of regional history, national politics, and individual vision. Robert Ficken provides another very interesting, lively, well-written account of an important character in Washington state's history. Ficken argues that Rufus Woods' tireless promotion of the Grand Coulee Dam brought significant power to Washington through the electricity generated and the political attention it brought to the state. We meet Woods as a questionably educated young wanderer who finds himself drawn into the newspaper business in Wenatchee, Washington, in 1904. Woods develops into a significant booster of Wenatchee as publisher and editor of the *Wenatchee Daily World.* Through the *World* he promotes the Grand Coulee Dam as the key to local economic success. The successful completion of the Grand Coulee Dam did not bring the promised prosperity to Wenatchee but remained as a monument to the perseverance and vision of Rufus Woods.

Robert Ficken does not separate Rufus Woods from the *World*; it was "his *Wenatchee Daily World*" (9). Woods' own words describe his editorial approach, "The folks know who is writing the column anyway, so I feel that I

might just as well use the pronoun 'I' which I do" (10). Woods' editorial column titled "In Our Own World" was a permanent feature of the front page and, according to Ficken, was a "personal outlet to autobiographical musings, political commentary, local history, and unadulterated rumormongering" (76). In the index of the book there is no separate listing for the *World*; it is listed under "Woods, Rufus, and *Daily World*." For Ficken, the *World* is a primary source, or one voice of Rufus Woods, and it is this relationship that is most interesting to journalism historians. Woods' boosterism for Wenatchee and the Grand Coulee Dam was largely expressed through the *World*. As the masthead slogan declares, it was the "BUCKLE OF THE POWER BELT OF AMERICA" (9). Ficken leaves no doubt that the *World* was significant in Woods' success, but the focus of the story is Rufus Woods, not the *Wenatchee Daily World*. This will leave some journalism historians wanting more, and for those journalism historians who believe a biographical approach to understanding the newspaper offers a limited view, this work falls short.

However, in fairness to Ficken, his goal was to produce a biography of Rufus Woods, not a history of the *World*, and this is a good biography. Ficken uses an excellent variety of primary sources, including the *World* which houses the Rufus Woods Papers (another testament to the relationship between Woods and the *World*). The collection of photographs at the end of the book seems more like an afterthought than an integral part of the work, but one photograph of newsboys is very reminiscent of the photographs of New York newsboys during the same period. While this work may fall short for some journalism historians, it does provide interesting insights into the relationship between regional newspapers and regional development, and suggests important regional newspaper histories are still needed.

Michael Brown, University of Wyoming

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Jack Fuller, *News Values: Ideas for an Information Age*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. 252 pp. Paper, $22.95.

For daily newspapers, these indeed are interesting times, as the Chinese curse goes. Penetration is declining, especially among young adults, public confidence is low, and alternative sources of news — developed to be immediate, interactive, and tailored to individual tastes and interests — are proliferating. But according to Jack Fuller, president and publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*, the greatest threat to daily newspapers does not lie in economic, social, and technological forces beyond their control. Rather, survival depends upon daily newspapers overcoming their own moral and commercial disorientation which stems from fuzzy thinking about what serving the community really means.

Most of Fuller's ruminations involve journalism's moral dimensions. He rejects objectivity and neutrality on the one hand and advocacy and

adversarialness on the other. Instead, Fuller sees journalism as a "truth discipline" that not only discovers and reports matters of public concern but also interprets them with hard and ample evidence. As a truth discipline, journalism serves the community by following the Golden Rule, presenting relevant perspectives in ways that their proponents would find fair.

Fuller spends the first three chapters setting up this practical neopositivism. Then the reading gets lively, especially when Fuller pours his ire over the New Journalism, deconstruction, and multiculturalism. The New Journalism, by recreating conversations, experimenting with point of view, and omitting attribution, has left readers confused over what news is true and what is imaginary. Deconstruction, the belief that meaning is only in the mind of the beholder, renders communication itself impossible. And multiculturalism, which insists that all values are relative because power relations, not reason, governs the world, discourages faith in ethical reasoning and conscience. For Fuller, these varieties of subjectivism have created a muddle of misdirection that puts the truth discipline in jeopardy.

The truth discipline needs a firm financial footing in addition to a steady moral compass, so Fuller spends the last third of the book explaining Colonel McCormick's maxim that "the first duty of a free press is to make a profit." That means pleasing the audience. Fuller concludes that the profitable public companies have been an improvement over their family-owned predecessors in this regard. Their advertising departments are able to identify subjects that can attract commercial support and be reported respectfully. Their market research is likewise valuable because it can identify developments in reader interest. Fuller warns against pandering — tawdriness earns disrespect in equal proportion to its short-term popularity — but he is equally convinced that the industry must deliver newspapers that the changing audience wants. For this reason, journalism needs to alter its traditional focus on politics. According to Fuller, "If newspapers do not give science, medicine, and technology the kind of attention they have gotten used to giving presidents, governors, mayors, and legislatures, journalists will deserve ridicule when they talk high-mindedly about their essential social purpose, because the leaders of science and technology today may make more of a difference in people's lives than heads of state" (184).

Calling for change at the same time that it affirms tradition, *News Values* is a reasonable response to the challenges that the daily newspaper business faces. It places responsibility for the desirability of newspapers squarely on the newspapers themselves. In Fuller's hands, this message is essentially hopeful, not just for the survival of daily newspapers, but also for their trustworthiness.

John P. Ferré, University of Louisville

Theodore L. Glasser and Charles T. Salmon, eds., *Public Opinion and the Communication of Consent.* New York and London: Guilford Press, 1995. 475 pp. Cloth, $49.95.

In *Public Opinion and the Communication of Consent*, Theodore L. Glasser and Charles T. Salmon have compiled eighteen essays by thirty-two scholars that examine the direction that public opinion research has taken, the relationship between public opinion and mass communication, and the connections between public opinion and individual opinion. The work's genesis derives from discussions on public opinion that began following the fiftieth anniversary of *Public Opinion Quarterly* in the late 1980s.

The essays on the whole suggest that public opinion and mass communication research should not have taken separate paths of development. They also warn that in an age when surveys are increasingly being used to gauge the opinion of the public by mass communication and other fields, we should not confuse what is discovered by polls with public opinion.

The essays are divided into five categories: The Nature of Public Opinion, The Institution of Public Opinion, Social and Psychological Contexts for Public Opinion, The Media of Communication and the Opinions of Publics, and Public Opinion and the Promise of Democracy. Within each of the sections, the reader finds discussions of theories that require an understanding of public opinion research that may go beyond the understanding of students in introductory-level courses, but upper-level students and scholars will find the essays valuable in understanding the role that public opinion has played in America and Western Europe since the eighteenth century.

While this work's value to political scientists, public opinion researchers, social scientists, and communication researchers is obvious, *Public Opinion and the Communication of Consent* offers media historians a source book for the historical background of public opinion and its relationship to mass communication. Within the essays, one may trace the role of public opinion from America's revolutionary period through contemporary times. Many of the chapters serve as historiographies of public opinion research. These chapters not only explain theories of public opinion, they define those theories within their historical setting. The book further aids historians wishing to write about topics relating to public opinion by offering insights into the work of some of public opinion research's most important figures. The historian must approach the text with this caveat: sorting out the historical information requires digging through almost all of the eighteen chapters because the information is presented by the various authors, not in any systematic way by the editors. The process, however, is not unlike sorting through the media historian's primary documents.

The relationship of media and public opinion presented by *Public Opinion and the Communication of Consent* is especially compelling in three chapters either written or cowritten by recognized leaders in the area of media research and media history. "The Press and the Illusion of Public Opinion: The Strange Case of Ronald Reagan's Popularity," by Elliot King and Michael Schudson, demonstrates that the press' perception of public opinion and what

public opinion research reveals may differ greatly. "Issues in the News and the Public Agenda: The Agenda-Setting Tradition," by Maxwell McCombs, Lucig Danielian, and Wayne Wanta, provides readers with a historical excursion into agenda setting from the initial study by McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1968 through current scholarship.

"The Press, Public Opinion, and Public Discourse," by James W. Carey, looks at public opinion through a First Amendment lens that discusses what Carey feels was the original intent of the First Amendment that guaranteed freedom for individual participation in the public opinion process and consequently the political direction of the nation. Carey charges that what has developed instead is an understanding of the First Amendment by media that finds media justifying themselves in the name of the public's right to know but really allowing the public to play no active role in public discourse, except as audience.

Public Opinion and the Communication of Consent offers material for many disciplines. It seeks to raise questions on the nature of public opinion and on its future. The role of mass communication is entwined within the framework of the essays. The book's strength for media historians is in how the story is told. While theories are valuable for application which no doubt will be of use for media historians who teach courses in mass communication and society, mass communication theory, media effects, and persuasion the explanation of the development of the theories in conjunction with the development of media and the nation is where this work holds the greatest promise for those studying media history.

David A. Copeland, Emory & Henry College

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Edward S. Herman, *Beyond Hypocrisy: Decoding the News in an Age of Propaganda including the Doublespeak Dictionary.* Boston: South End Press, 1992. Paper, $14.

For Edward Herman, doublespeak is the deliberate manipulation and misuse of words to further the wrong ideological agenda. In *Beyond Hypocrisy. Decoding the News in an Age of Propaganda,* Herman attempts to provide readers with tools with which to understand the origins of doublespeak and the misguided perspective which frames it. Doublespeak is created by governmental elites and is part of a well-orchestrated and planned conspiracy aimed at indoctrinating, brainwashing, and manipulating the populace.

Unlike Raymond Williams's seminal text *Keywords* which illustrates the active and evolving nature of language, Herman seems to maintain a reverence for the "true" or proper meanings of words. He finds the ability to lie and to get away with those lies central to the world of doublespeak. For example, he suggests that former President George Bush's ability to selectively shape information and effectively lie allowed him to condemn Saddam Hussein

and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait even though the Reagan/Bush administration had previously supported Hussein's aggression.

Herman insists that in order for doublespeak to become institutionalized the media must collaborate with the government. He offers examples of the press coverage (or lack thereof) of El Salvador and Nicaragua to support the key role the media play in the maintenance of doublespeak and insists that the media must systematically avoid and suppress information counter to the official governmental agenda.

Fundamentally, it is the issue of ideology that drives Herman's discourse. To fully appreciate this book, readers must first agree with Herman that the reigning ideological perspective of late industrial capitalism in the United States is bankrupt, that politics in the 1990s is farce, and that a well-orchestrated state conspiracy exists and is attempting to destroy the last vestiges of democratic life.

The first part of *Beyond Hypocrisy* offers a historical and political context for a variety of key doublespeak terms. Herman draws primarily on examples of foreign policy during the Reagan/Bush administrations to reinforce his position. While his examples illustrate his concerns, they date the text and may possibly encourage readers to suggest that times have changed and things are different now. The second part of the book contains a Doublespeak Dictionary for the 1990s that is augmented with political cartoons by Matt Wuerker. While some of Herman's doublespeak definitions are humorous, his wit is sarcastic, cynical, and biting, and is bound to offend more than a few readers. Four examples from the doublespeak dictionary illustrate the range and tone of the text:

> **Antisemitism**: Formerly bias and prejudice against Jews; now, open criticism of Israeli policy.
> **Backlash**: The surfacing of some large, partially submerged lumps in the melting pot, upon a brief stirring of the ladle. The impart an unappetizing flavor to the entire dish.
> **Mere gook rule**: That deaths and injuries to lesser breeds who stand in our way may be ignored in law and policy-making; technically, the marginal cost of a dead gook (Arab, etc.) is zero. The rule is based on the fact that gooks do not value life and feel pain like we do; besides which, they stand in our way.
> **Special interests**: Workers, women, students, farmers, the aged and infirm, the unemployed, and black and other minorities; the general population; unimportant people.

As these examples show, the doublespeak dictionary actively and repeatedly reinforces Herman's own opinion of the political problems facing contemporary society. In conclusion, perhaps one additional word might be

included in his dictionary: **hammer**: To repeatedly beat one's message into the heads of readers. See *Beyond Hypocrisy*.

Bonnie Brennen, Virginia Commonwealth University

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Richard McCord, *The Chain Gang: One Newspaper Versus the Gannett Empire*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1996. 304 pp. Cloth, $24.95.

Gannett continues to be the largest newspaper chain in the United States both in terms of the number of properties owned and in circulation. Gannett has also long been criticized for their expansion practices and chain journalism attitude. Richard McCord's book will only add to the indictment of Gannett's practices. This is not a scholarly book, although McCord does provide context in explaining the growth of chain journalism and joint operating agreements. This is really an anecdotal account of the author's personal battle against Gannett and the help he gives a fellow editor.

The book consists of three unrelated experiences with a background battle in Salem, Oregon, between the a weekly independently-owned *Salem Community Press* and the Gannett-owned *Capitol Journal*. It then moves to the battle between the author's weekly *Santa Fe Reporter* and the*New Mexican*. The majority of the book focuses on the author's efforts to save the *Green Bay News-Chronicle* from being destroyed by the Gannett-owned *Green Bay Press-Gazette*.

The book is fascinating reading and McCord has an intriguing, lucid style of writing. There is a review of different competitive strategies used by the differing Gannett Newspapers to "eliminate competitors." Conversely there is a background on the strategies used to preserve newspapers in an adversarial climate. The story of Salem, Oregon, involves the author's access to court records which he was surprised to see. The Santa Fe account is a review of his strategies for preserving the paper. The Green Bay story is a review of the ideas he implemented for maintaining a friend's weekly paper.

The book is not only an indictment of Gannett, but a criticism of other media which serve as watchdogs for the media. McCord condemns *Editor & Publisher* for not covering certain decisions and settlements evolving around Gannett and their practices. He denounces journalists and academics who participate in Freedom Forum activities with the realization of Gannett's previous poor reputation in journalism.

Although the examples are staggering and the insight to some of Gannett's practices appalling, this is still a biographical account. The book is devoid of endnotes, although some citations are mentioned within the text. The author has to be taken entirely at his word on much of the events. As a scholarly reference book it is extremely weak.

Edward Adams, Angelo State University

George P. Oslin, *The Story of Telecommunications*. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1992. Cloth, $35.

If you are looking for a highly readable history of telecommunications in the United States, this book is it. Beginning with the telegraph and concluding with the break-up of AT&T and its aftermath through the early 1990s, this book presents an account of point-to-point telecommunication technological progress from the semaphore and the Morse telegraph to hand-cranked telephones and today's computers and telephone systems. Published in 1992, the book understandably does not deal with developments covered during the mid-1990s in the telecommunications field, but as a whole, the insight and narrative accounts Oslin offers are engagingly presented and informative for beginning students and seasoned communication historians alike. It is an excellent addition to previous works, now out of print, such as Robert Thompson's *Wiring a Continent* and Alvin Harlow's *Old Wires and New Waves*.

In writing the book, nonagenarian George Oslin relies not only on traditional archival sources but also on his own contacts and memories developed over thirty-five years with Western Union. (For instance, did you know Oslin originated the "Singing Telegram"? See pages 331-332 for that interesting story!) His numerous personal interviews, including Thomas Edison and William Campbell, the last surviving Pony Express rider, and his use of diaries, personal letter collections, newspapers, magazines and books add color and lively anecdotes to his work. One find utilized here is a manuscript for a book written by Samuel Morse's partner, F.O.J. (Fog) Smith. While Smith invariably focuses on his own contributions in his manuscript, Oslin sifts through Smith's tales to glean appropriate material and entertaining insights for this book.

This book's chapters cover the first telegraph lines in the United States as well as the telegraph's expansion into the South, Midwest, and West. The story of the transcontinental telegraph lines as well as the transatlantic and transpacific undersea cable links are interestingly told as is the story of the telephone, from initial trials to satellite transmission and the break-up of AT&T. Biographical sketches of the men and women involved in telecommunication's development add flavor to the story of the industries' evolution.

Students will enjoy the comprehensive, readable text as well as the numerous photographs and easily understood graphic displays. In all, this book is an excellent, information-packed introduction to the history of the field of telecommunications, and it will add to our basic understanding and knowledge in the field.

Louise Benjamin, University of Georgia.

Charlotte Ryan, *Prime Time Activism: Media Strategies for Grassroots Organizing*. Boston: South End Press, 1991. 295 pp. Cloth, $30. Paper, $17.

Recognizing the vital role the media can and does play in shaping and moulding public opinion, several interest groups, public advocacy coalitions, think tanks, and other nongovernmental organizations have employed various strategies to more effectively communicate their concerns to the print and broadcast media. In her study, *Prime Time Activism*, Charlotte Ryan adds social movements to the growing list of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) investing considerable resources to capture media attention. Although several arguments are raised throughout this book, Ryan's main thesis is that while many grassroots organizations must overcome innumerable obstacles to secure access to the mainstream media, it is essential that they educate themselves about how the local and national media function in order to properly convey their beliefs to the American public. Ryan argues that since the mainstream media often marginalize issues raised by social movements, a consistent theme advanced throughout this study, social movements must learn how to raise the profile of their organization in a less than hospitable environment.

By drawing on the experiences of two Massachusetts-based organizations — the Hotel Workers Union Local 26 (which campaigned in 1982 for a new contract with fourteen Boston hotels) and the New Bedford Delegation to Nicaragua (which sought to increase public awareness about the plight of Nicaraguans during the Reagan administration's campaign to overthrow the Sandinista regime) — Ryan offers some practical and straightforward advice on how to manage the media. Understanding the different institutional pressures imposed on print and broadcast journalists, organizing demonstrations that will provide powerful visual images, and identifying the newsworthiness of particular social concerns, represent but a handful of suggestions Ryan makes to social movements interested in being propelled into the public spotlight.

The two case studies Ryan relies on to highlight the different strategies social movements employ to enhance their visibility in the public arena are useful and insightful. Unfortunately, since much of the material focusing on these two organizations is scattered throughout the study, it is often difficult to follow or indeed to recall the importance of particular events. Had these case studies been examined in one or two chapters, Ryan would have been able to paint a fairly clear picture as to why some media strategies were successful and conversely why others failed. Furthermore, by providing a more detailed and focused account of how these organizations attempted to manipulate the media, Ryan would have been able to offer some fascinating observations about the power struggle between NGOs and the media.

For individuals involved in various social movements or for scholars studying these types of organizations, this book may indeed provide some useful information. However, as a book which seeks to inform scholars about the ability of social movements to successfully manage the media, this book is unlikely to attract serious attention. While much of the empirical material

focusing on the two social movements in this study is interesting, too often it is overshadowed by the author's rhetoric. Indeed, on several occasions, Ryan makes sweeping generalizations about the media elite without providing any supporting documentation. As a long-time social activist, Ryan is able to provide considerable insight into the inner workings of social movements. Unfortunately, as a trained sociologist, Ryan has not been able or willing to distance herself sufficiently from the subject she is exploring. As a result, this study is riddled with bias.

Donald Abelson, University of Western Ontario

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Rodger Streitmatter, *Unspeakable: The Rise of the Gay and Lesbian Press in America.* Boston, London: Faber and Faber, 1995. 394 pp. Cloth, $27:95.

The first time I bought a gay newspaper, Toronto, Ontario's *Body Politic* (you always remember your first time) was in the fall of 1974. I was a graduate student at the University of Toronto — and a freshman at the School of Dorothy. My education was about to be broadened. Though Toronto was the capital of Gay Liberation in Canada, I was still so immured in my closet that I might as well have been living on Sodom Road in Fort Erie, Ontario, or in Lower Dildo, Newfoundland. These places actually exist, by the way, and good folk still live there utterly innocent of gay irony.

As Rodger Streitmatter points out in his generously ironic history of the gay and lesbian press — the irony begins with its shove-it-back-at' em title *Unspeakable* — the purchase of a gay newspaper is often 'a first tiny step' on the road to self-acceptance and social affirmation for many gay people. It certainly was for me, though at the time it felt like a giant step off the Straight and Narrow.

If only Streitmatter's history of the gay press had been available two decades ago, it would have saved me a bit of change and a lot of bother. Though it is an eminently academic book, with scores of learned footnotes and critical judgments, it doesn't overlook the distinctly unacademic kind of publication I was looking for in my pre-coming-out days. What I should have bought, as one who marched to the beat of a different drummer, was a rousing homophile magazine like *Drum* (first published, appropriately, in the City of Brotherly Love in 1964); or a raunchy pansexual tabloid like *Screw* (Manhattan's simple answer to all my problems in the 1970s); or even a wild and woolly liberation rag like *GAY* (which 'burst onto the streets of New York City' in the wake of the Stonewall Riots in 1969). Since these all ceased publication years ago, I'm afraid I missed the boat. Back copies, no doubt, are hard to come by.

While Streitmatter heartily praises Clark Polak, the editor of *Drum*, for discovering the secret to boosting the circulation of any serious periodical aimed at gay men — namely, sexy photographs of cute guys in Speedos — he cannot

hide his grave reservations about the infamous Al Goldstein, publisher of *Screw*, for creating "arguably the most vulgar and sexually explicit newspaper in the history of publishing." Despite his aesthetic qualms, however, Streitmatter knows a market-tested success formula when he sees one. If sex sells underground newspapers, it might even sell academic books.

Following the lead of Polak and Goldstein, he heats up his otherwise earnest introduction by reprinting a très *GAY* newsphoto of a liberated penis flaunted by a Greenwich Village bookshop employee who was facing arrest (and a low-angled camera) on 15 December 1969 for selling pornography. The in-your-face éclat of that shot is sure to attract the gay male gaze to this book, as nothing else will. "Bold. Brash. Audacious." That's how the author himself describes his subject matter even before we get to the full-frontal teaser. If this promo sounds like one of the screaming headlines of porn-flick ads from *Screw* or *GAY*, not to wonder: the very title of the book echoes the one-word mastheads of the racier publications reviewed in it. What was once "unspeakable" in the decorous groves of academe is clearly now speakable, and visible, in Streitmatter's streetsmart account of what's really been going on in the bushes all these years.

The twenty-five images reproduced in the text provide a connoisseurial sampling of five decades of gay and lesbian cover art, activist graphics, erotic drawings, club ads, psychedelia, and photojournalism. These add considerable spice to what might otherwise have been a bland read in stretches. If your appetite for obscure lesbian journals with menacing names (e.g. *Killer Dyke*) has waned over the years, then you'll probably find the evolution of cover layouts from *The Ladder's* chaste black and white designs through to *Deneuve's* glossy glam shots enough to sustain your interest through the rather heavy course of radical lesbian rehash served up in chapter six ("Defining Lesbian Culture") with its nostalgic evocation of the lost-generation Lifestyle of the High Disco era. The get-up on the *Advocate* model on page 187 is a hoot.

While the writing in *Unspeakable* is never flat or unpalatable, it occasionally tries too hard to turn stale leftovers into fresh delights by reconstituting as zingy social history the catalogue of fagrags and hagrags compiled by Allan V. Miller in *Our Own Voices* (1990). Though Streitmatter acknowledges his debt to this useful directory in his introduction, he clearly wishes to exceed it in interest and impact. And he does, by stirring up the data of the archivists with the drama of the activists. The result is an index with a strong story line, a catalogue with fierce conflicts and bold characters, a periodical list with lots of love interest, a dash of Hollywood gossip, and an apocalyptic crisis. Not your average reference work, to be sure, though I wish it had included an ordinary index of names and topics at the end for those dull plodding types who'll read it for scholarly details rather than scandalous dish.

I suspect that if *Unspeakable* had indeed been available to me back in my university days, I wouldn't have been disappointed by my deflating foray into the gay press. I could have used the pecs-and-buns portion of the volume as a safe academic substitute for *Screw*. Streitmatter has a good eye for the telling image, and his enthusiasm for the look of the gay and lesbian press (even in its

infancy) is perhaps stronger than his regard for its written contents. *Unspeakable* is clearly a labour of love, the fond repaying of a debt of gratitude to a much-reviled but indispensable companion to the emergent Gay Soul.

Though he also confesses that "objectivity is a myth," his authorial viewpoint for the 346 pages of social history and critical analysis preceding his disclosure about the significance of the gay press in his own coming-out process is so resolutely impersonal that it verges on Shiltsian omniscience. Randy Shilts, hailed on page 216 as "the most famous gay reporter in history," is evidently Streitmatter's role model as a storyteller as well as a prose stylist. Just as Shilts, who died of AIDS in 1994, kept himself serenely out of his narrative of the AIDS crisis despite his deep secret personal involvement in it, so Streitmatter sustains the myth of scholarly objectivity in his rather happier tale — the gay press rises and rises but never falls, despite frequent lapses in taste — by removing all traces of his own professional and psychosexual engagement with it until the very last paragraph of his final chapter. His positionality, as queer theorists would say in their charming argot, is paradoxically occluded in the discursive closet of heteronormative objectivism.

Non-American readers may well object to the centripetal Americanness of Streitmatter's narrative in other respects. Were there no influences from Europe on gay and lesbian journalism in America? If there were, they remain largely unspoken in *Unspeakable* despite the strong internationalist bent of Gay Liberation throughout the 1970s. The whole enterprise seems to spring — queerly enough — from the busy brain of a quaintly parochial secretary out in L.A. who called herself "Lisa Ben" (a hokey acrostic for lesbian) to hide her true identity from family, employers, and other oppressors during the 1940s. No Radclyffe Hall, she. But even Lisa Ben reviewed Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* and therefore knew something about the efforts of European "Diurnings" to find liberation from the restraints of hide-bound nationalisms in a cosmopolitan culture created by sexual emigres.

Despite his laudable ambition to instruct Straight America, however, I can't see my librarian aunt over in Michigan or my cousin the cop down in Connecticut racing out to their local bookstores anytime soon to fill that embarrassing genocidal gap in their cultural history with what matters to Streitmatter. His subject does matter to me because I have a history of reading the gay press myself — albeit for unintellectual reasons — and so I suspect that the majority of his appreciative readers will be fellow homos predisposed to support his project of shaping a mass of disconnected reading experiences and vanishing memorabilia into a pride enhancing tribal history.

As a journalism professor with interests that definitely extend beyond the bawdy politics of gay men — men with 'zero clout,' as Kushner's Roy Kohn cruelly observes on receiving his AIDS diagnosis — Streitmatter has strategically set his often comic history of lavender journalism against the politically serious background of the "alternative press" in America. As he argued in his previous volume on African-American women journalists who changed herstory, the alternative press has kept alive the democratic ideal that

oppressed peoples can gain clout through finding and raising their voices collectively.

While lesbian journalists seem to be exceptionally committed to the vocal amplification of their political power, Streitmatter is the first to admit that gay journalists have published a lot of silly, campy, trivial, and downright vulgar things over the past four decades. He looks back in mortification, for instance, at the "excesses" of the Stonewall-era rags with their "anarchistic concepts" and "titillating images." He cringes at the journalistic evidence — and he's scanned more than most of us would care to admit — proving the stereotypical insatiability of the "gay male desire for smooth flesh and bulging sex organs." (Tell me it isn't so!) Like Randy Shilts again, he is inclined to echo Larry Kramer's tedious jeremiads against the hedonistic childishness of his community's blatant phallocentrism. Reading *Unspeakable* left me with a comparable feeling of unexpected and grateful recovery.

James Miller, University of Western Ontario

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- "The Rhetoric of Independence and Boosterism in Late Nineteenth-Century California Journalism

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From the Editor's Desk...

WE HAVE USED THIS SPACE now and then to grumble about the state of historical understanding that exists among the younger generation, especially those under our charge at universities and colleges across the nation; if this has happened once too often for your liking, turn to another section of the journal. A recent opening of the *American Journalism* mailbag brought up yet another knowledge gap, in the form of a complimentary issue of *The Printer*, a tabloid which declares itself to be the "Only monthly for letterpress." If you've had trouble with blank stares when names like Ida Tarbel and James Gordon Bennett come up, you also know what it's like to ask the question, "What is meant by 'letterpress printing,' as opposed to any other means of putting ink on paper?" A few students may have taken a graphics course, putting them a step ahead of the others, but most wouldn't know a Ludlow from a Linotype. Indeed, the eyes of many younger scholars who grew up in the offset era may glaze over when the older set chats about the good/bad old days of letterpress.

The Printer is, as we read it, a forum for hobbyists who like to turn out quality printing via letterpress as well as a place to carry on thoughtful discussions about printing history. This thoughtful tabloid reminded us that there is still only a fragile understanding of the impact of technology on communication history. Unless you have read Elizabeth Eisenstein's seminal work on the impact of printing, you're tempted to say that Gutenberg changed things forever and immediately, which isn't quite right. If we haven't been able to fully understand and explain the impact of movable type, one must wonder how well we've done with other new technology, particularly this new kid on the block, the Internet. Exploring technology and its relationship to changing media environments and usage is a relatively untapped field, and certainly not simple antiquarianism. So, we thank editor-publishers Michael and Sally Phillips for providing grist for our mill, and reminding us there's much to be done.

WBE

(*The Printer,* 337 Wilson St., Findley, Ohio 45840, $25 per year for twelve issues.)

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In All the Papers: Reporting on Religion in Colonial America

By David A. Copeland

Religion was an important subject of discussion in eighteenth-century American and an important part of the lives of most Americans. This article analyzes the significance of religion in colonial life as reflected in America's newspapers.

Early in October 1770, Rhode Island printer John Carter received a letter, its writer requesting it be printed in the *Providence Gazette*. Signed "A PROTESTANT," the writer was outraged that in such an enlightened time, the lands of people were still being confiscated by governments when those people refused to support the government-prescribed form of religion. "To take by force their estates from them, to support a religion or worship that they do not choose, is a piece of oppression that would make even a moral heathen blush," the writer stated about his own colony of Connecticut. "Yet many instances of the same have we had, and still have!"[1] In an era when Americans were in ever greater numbers calling for political freedom, "the free choice of their own religion," as the writer called it, was still being denied to some in colonial America.

For the residents of British colonial America, religion had always been a significant issue. Many of the first English settlers to cross the Atlantic made the hazardous journey for religious reasons, and religion was seen as a vital aspect of life. The Bible was the one book that almost every settler possessed,[2] and religious books and commentaries were basic items on any colonial

1. *Providence Gazette; and Country Journal,* 13 October 1770, 2.
2. Oscar Theodore Barck, Jr. and Hugh Talmage Lefler, *Colonial America* (New York: Macmillan, 1958), 379.

bookshelf.[3] Parents insisted that children learn to read so that they could understand the Bible, and colleges were begun in colonial American to train ministers.[4] Religion was, as Patricia U. Bonomi has observed, so entwined with life in eighteenth-century America that religion's mark was left indelibly on all aspects of life.[5]

This research deals with the religious news that was presented in colonial newspapers. For the study, approximately 7,400 editions of colonial newspapers available on microfilm were read. Newspapers were read in their entirety to discover religious content.[6] A sizable number of religious news items, however, does not mean that all aspects of the news in colonial newspapers were religiously motivated. Nor does it mean that the growing political fervor that captured the attention of many colonial printers from the Stamp Act crisis onward was rooted in the religious beliefs of Americans.[7]

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3. Richard Beale David, *A Colonial Southern Bookshelf: Reading in the Eighteenth Century* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979), 75-90.
4. David D. Hall, "Religion and Society: Problems and Reconsiderations," in *Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Period,* eds. Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University, 1984), 322.
5. Patricia U. Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 3.
6. During the colonial period, printers published approximately 36,000 weekly, biweekly and triweekly editions of newspapers. Because of the large number of newspapers in existence, a method was devised for this study that would provide comprehensive coverage of all colonial newspapers while holding the number of editions that needed to be read to a manageable number. All extant editions prior to 1720 were read, and from 1720-1775, newspapers were read in five-year increments — 1720, 1725, and so on. Every extant and available newspaper edition printed in the study years from 1720-1755 was read. By the end of the colonial period, all colonies except New Jersey and Vermont had newspapers. From 1760-1775, the large number of newspapers and total editions printed during each of the study years necessitated sampling. A method of selecting newspapers for these years was devised that ensured a low margin of error, less than 4 percent, meaning that less than four chances in one hundred existed for missing a news item dealing with religion. More than two thousand newspapers were read for the years 1760-1775 or between 500-600 for each year of the study. Even though sampling occurred in selecting years for this study and newspapers to be read from 1760-1775, sampling was not involved in the reading of the newspapers. This research makes no assumptions about years not in the study. But because of the slow change of concepts and practices in eighteenth-century America, one can conclude any news omitted might be similar to that discussed in this research. Sampling figures based on Donald p. Warwick and Charles A. Lininger, *The Sample Survey: Theory and Practice* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975), 93.
7. Ibid., 6-10. Cedric B. Cowing, *The Great Awakening and the American Revolution: Colonial Thought in the 18th Century* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1971), 178-225. Bonomi and Cowing believe that from the Great Awakening on, religion played a larger and larger role in American political though and shaped America's effort as revolution. Works that have looked at newspapers' role in the revolutionary

Newspapers in the colonial period, regardless of motivation for news, were a reflection of the society that they served, and they were stocked amply with religious news and news indelibly tinted by religion. Religious news was especially heavy in the 1740s when religious revival was rampant in the colonies.

Although many eighteenth-century citizens would no doubt have credited much of the religious interest in revival and discussion of religious issues in print to God's providence, one individual acted as the catalyst for this explosion, and his name was George Whitefield. Whitefield revitalized religion in eighteenth-century America and captured the attention of the colonial press like no other individual. An orator of uncommon ability, Whitefield's first preaching tour, which lasted from October 1739 to January 1741, can be traced accurately through colonial newspapers; every visit Whitefield made to America from that time to his death in Massachusetts in 1770 was noted in newspapers. News of Whitefield, as Charles E. Clark correctly pointed out, helped colonial newspapers focus their news content upon events that either originated in America or had an immediate impact on American readers.[8]

Colonial newspapers carried on a relationship with Whitefield for thirty years, but the Grand Itinerant was far from being the sole source of religious information in colonial newspapers. Newspaper articles credited many events to God's providence, and religious liberty remained a source of conversation from about 1730 on.[9] Newspapers printed ordination notices of pastors, hymns, scripture passages, and sermons regularly. The religious nature of colonial governments also found its way continually into newspapers through calls for days of "Fasting, Prayer and Thanksgiving to Almighty God." The religious news of colonial newspapers demonstrates that most colonists were Protestants who brought with them to America an intense hatred of the Roman Catholic Church, a hatred that each generation continued to foster throughout the colonial period. In fact, a page one story in the first *Boston News-Letter* dealt with the threat that Catholicism presented to all British citizens.[10]

If, as Bonomi suggests, religion penetrated all aspects of colonial life, then it is only natural to assume that religion played a vital role in the life and content of colonial newspapers. But did it? Based upon the content of colonial newspapers, religion occupied an important place within society and affected

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process, however, do no point to an over religiosity in news articles. See Arthur M. Schlesinger, *Prelude to Independence: The Newspaper War on Britain 1764-1776* (New York: Random House, 1957); and Edmund S. Morgan and Helen M. Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis: Prologue to Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953).

8. Charles E. Clark, "The Newspapers of Colonial America," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 100 (1990): 382. Clark draws this conclusion but offers no tangible examples to support the claim.

9. Exactly why the issue of religious liberty was not discussed to any great extent prior to 1730 may be explained by the fact that few newspapers existed prior to that time.

10. *Boston News-Letter,* 24 April 1704, 1.

some aspects of all types of news. Most leaders in colonial eighteenth-century America, as Bonomi notes, wanted and expected to build an orderly and reverent society based upon those leaders' preconceived notions of the church, the Puritans offering a prime example.

But as settlers ventured out into the rigors of everyday life, fighting disease, Indians, the elements of nature, and foreign adversaries occupied more of the colonial American's time than actual church attendance.[11] Religion was important, vital, but every piece of news that appeared in colonial newspapers was not tainted with religious overtones. If it was, these religious connotations are lost upon readers from later time periods. Instead, there was news about religion, and there was news about important events. At times the two overlapped as in the case of George Whitefield or when the news of colonial newspapers asserted religious implications for an event such as the hand of God in an earthquake in New England.[12] At other times the news about certain occurrences was, as David Paul Nord observed, "simply the news" and completely unencumbered by any religious strings or implications. Religious news was, regardless of the reason, a vital part of the information presented by colonial printers.[13]

Religion and Colonial Newspapers

When colonial newspapers deal with religious topics, the news falls into five general categories. Within them, one can see how religious thought helped to shape opinions and observe how the politics of the day affected religious perception. The five areas discovered when reading the documents include the portrayal of Roman Catholics, colonial religiosity, God's providence, George Whitefield, and religious liberty. The discussion begins with the Roman Catholic Church, the topic of the first story in the first edition of the *Boston News-Letter* on 24 April 1704.

The Roman Catholic Menace

The intense dislike of Catholics by the Protestant Englishmen of colonial British America was evident throughout the colonial period in colonial newspapers. The dislike of Catholicism was no doubt the product of a two-fold bias. First, of course, were the general theological differences between Catholics and Protestants. The second reason for the intense dislike of Catholicism was rooted in the political situation of Europe. England had long been in political confrontation with France and Spain, both Catholic nations. Anti-Catholic news reports in colonial newspapers increased whenever there was a threat from a Catholic nation against England, and the anti-Catholic news did not necessarily have to pertain to any threat against England. Anti-Catholic news in colonial

11. Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven,* 14-15.
12. *Boston Gazette, or Weekly Journal,* 22 May 1750, 1.
13. David Paul Nord, "Teleology and the News: The Religious Roots of American Journalism, 1630-1730," *Journal of American History* 77 (1990): 36.

newspapers was presented to demonstrate the errors of Catholicism as viewed through Protestant lenses, and it portrayed both the Roman church and Catholic kingdoms as barbaric and inhuman in their treatment of non-Catholics.

Fear of a Catholic coup in Scotland and subsequently England spurred the first anti-Catholic news story to appear in the *Boston News-Letter* in 1704. Anne Stuart sat upon the English throne, and England had made sure with the Act of Settlement in 1701 that only Protestant successors could assume the crown of Great Britain. Anne was the last Protestant child of James II, who was forced to abdicate the throne in 1688. But Anne had a half-brother, James III, who was Catholic, and many Englishmen feared that this "Pretender" to the throne would mount an invasion force and enter the British Isles in an attempt to capture the crown for himself.[14] The *News-Letter* apprised Boston citizens of the situation in the Motherland in an article about "the present danger of the Kingdom and of the Protestant Religion." Not only was the Protestant religion in danger in England, but according to the newspaper report, all of Britain was in danger of being invaded by the French with the express goal of a Catholic takeover of the English monarchy and French control of the nation. The story said:

> Papists swarm in that Nation [Scotland] . . . many Scores of Priests & Jesuits are come hither from France. . . . That the French Kinch [King] knows there cannot be a more effectual way for himself to arrive at the Universal Monarchy, and to ruine the Protestant Interest, than by setting up the Pretender upon the Throne of England.[15]

Threats to the throne of England by a "popish Pretender"[16] continued throughout the colonial period, and news of these activities inflamed anti-Catholic sentiment in newspapers in America. In 1725, fears that the Pretender might recapture the English throne appeared in newspapers, but this time, the news ran concurrently with news of Catholic atrocities against Protestants in Poland. No doubt readers speculated that a Catholic takeover in England would produce similar attacks on English-speaking Protestants. When Catholic backed troops entered the Polish town of Thorn, the *American Weekly Mercury* reported, numerous citizens had their hands and heads chopped off in the public

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14. Paul L. Hughes and Robert F. Fries, *Crown and Parliament in Tudor-Stuart England: A Documentary Constitutional History, 1485-1714* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1959), 333; G.M. Trevelyan, *History of England: From Utrecht to Modern Times,* 3rd ed. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1952), 45-46; and J.P. Kenyon, *Stuart England* (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), 243.
15. *Boston News-Letter,* 24 April 1704, 1.
16. After attempts at attaining the crown by James III failed, his son, Charles III, continued the battle to return the Stuarts to the throne of England. Their efforts failed, and the Hanoverian line, begun by the German George I in 1715, continued throughout the colonial period.

square. The executed were then drawn and quartered and left around the town.[17] Two weeks later, the *Mercury* stated that "many Lutherans fall a Sacrifice of their Implacable Enemies the Papists."[18] Similar news from other parts of Europe followed.[19]

The fears of a Roman Catholic takeover of England and her colonies through war efforts by the French or Spanish almost always led to anti-Roman Catholic propaganda in colonial newspapers. When England and Spain went to war in 1739, for example, newspapers in America noted the evil way that Catholic nations treated their Protestant citizens. In Cuba, the *American Weekly Mercury* reported, a Protestant missionary was burned alive using green wood in order to increase the pain inflicted. The news report continued that such torture awaited all Protestants who stood in the way of Spanish Catholic conquest. "No Religion can be propagated by Cruelty and the Sword," the article concluded, but they were "always the Spaniards Method."[20] Newspapers in the colonies were already carrying news about Spanish attacks upon English sailing ships before the war with Spain was ever declared, and the fear of imminent attack in the Southern colonies led to a buildup of fortifications and militia activity, especially in South Carolina.[21] There can be little doubt that news items like the one in the *Weekly Mercury* and essays such as "The Wiles of Popery" that appeared in the *South-Carolina Gazette*[22] helped fuel fear of the Spanish and increase anti-Catholic sentiment.

The news of the evils perpetrated by Catholics began to grow again as French and English hostilities gathered momentum in the mid-1740s,[23] culminating in the French and Indian War (1754-1763). The *Maryland Gazette,* at this time, issued a warning on the dangers of Catholicism in America. In the colony begun as a haven for Roman Catholics, this condemnation of the Roman religion no doubt summed up the feelings of most Protestants in America about the dangers of allowing Roman Catholics into the colonies:

> I utterly detest PERSECUTION, on Account of PRIVATE SENTIMENTS in Religion; but there is a wide Difference between THAT and nursing up a Sett of People, who are

17. *American Weekly Mercury* (Philadelphia), 1 April 1725, 2.
18. Ibid., 22 April 1725, 1.
19. See, for example, *American Weekly Mercury*, 1 July 1725, 1; *Boston Evening-Post,* 4 March 1745, 2.
20. *Philadelphia American Weekly Mercury*, 19 June 1740, 2.
21. The *South-Carolina Gazette* ran numerous articles on Spanish attacks, troop build-ups, and the strengthening of fortifications surrounding Charleston and parts of Georgia during 1740. See for example, 26 January 1740, 2; 4 April 1740, 1; 24 May 1740, 2; 1 July 1740, 2; 1 August 1740, 3; and 6 September 1740, 2.
22. *South-Carolina Gazette* (Charleston), 16 October 1740, 1.
23. See, for example, *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), 6 June 1745, 3; *New-York Evening-Post,* 9 December 1745, 2; *Pennsylvania Journal, or Weekly Advertiser* (Philadelphia), 27 February 1750, 1; *Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis), 28 February 1750, 1; and *Boston Evening-Post,* 23 April 1750, 2; 9 June 1855, 2.

> infatuated till they believe it their DUTY to cut our Throats in Return, and that it is meritorious, and even doing Honour and Service to the All-merciful GOD, for them so to do. The tender Mercies of the ROMAN CATHOLICS towards HERETICS (when in Power) are known to be VERY CRUELTIES. . . . This Nation has found it ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY to restrain ROMAN CATHOLICS by Law, from sitting in either House of Parliament, from voting for Members of Parliament, from holding any Office or Place of Trust or Profit, from PUBLIC Schools and Mass-houses.. . . But I greatly fear not one of those Laws extends to our Colonies in AMERICA, where they would be MORE NECESSARY.[24]

The French menace was defeated by English and American forces, and by 1763, the French were legally removed from America, even though some French activity continued in the lands west of the Appalachian Mountains. England and the American colonies experienced no more large and united military efforts against them by their Catholic foes during the remainder of the colonial period. Following the French and Indian War, the American colonies entered into a period of growing hostilities with another enemy — England. Ironically, it was to Catholic nations that the American colonies turned for aid once the Revolution began, demonstrating either that religious tolerance had become more accepted in America by the 1770s or that in the politics of war and the availabiltiy of aid, not religious stripe, produces allies.

Even though Americans of the revolutionary period could separate religion and military aid, religion and politics were not always separate entities in colonial America. The religious activity of colonial governments as found in political decrees is but one of the many examples of the religiosity of colonial America that appeared in colonial newspapers.

Documents of Colonial Religiosity

Colonial Americans demonstrated their religious beliefs in newspapers in a number of ways. One way was to insert scripture, sermons, and hymns into the newspapers so that they might be shared with all readers. Other ways included weekly tabulations of those baptized and announcements of ordinations of preachers.[25] Political decrees based on religious requirements were also prominent during the colonial period. In cities like Boston, dozens of churches

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24. *Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis), 31 July 1755, 2. (emphasis included).
25. Many newspapers listed the number of infants baptized each week. The *Boston Gazette,* for example, published the number baptized each week through 1770. Ordinations of ministers appeared constantly throughout the period in most papers but especially in the Boston newspapers. See, for example, *Boston Gazette,* 2 November 1730, 2; *Boston Gazette, or Weekly Advertiser,* 11 February 1755, 3; and *Boston Gazette, and Country Journal,* 3 September 1770, 3.

existed, and newspapers were an excellent way to share what went on in a particular church with others. These documents of religiosity affirm the fact that colonial Americans were a religious people with no less than sixty percent of them regularly attending church services in the eighteenth century.[26]

A popular method of demonstrating religious beliefs for colonial citizens was submitting scripture, hymns, and religious poems to newspapers to print. Scriptural interpretation allowed parts of the Bible to fit the colonial situation, as an adaptation of Psalm 23 did. In the colonial version, the shepherd provided food and sustenance that turned the new wilderness of America into a blessed place:

> The Lord my Pasture shall prepare,
> And feed me with a Shepher'd Care:
> His Presence shall my Wants supply,
> And guard me with a watchful Eye;
> My Noon day Walks he shall attend,
> And all my Mid-night Hours defend. . . .
> Tho' in a bear and rugged Way,
> Through devious lonely Wilds I stray,
> Thy Bounty shall my Pains beguile:
> The barren Wilderness shall smile
> With sudden Greens and Herbage crown'd,
> And Streams shall murmur all around.[27]

Hymns proclaimed times of joy and important events within the life of the church[28] and reinforced biblical beliefs such as the creation,[29] the significance of God's gift of his son,[30] God's mercy,[31] the saving power of Jesus,[32] and the second coming of Christ.[33]

Sermons, religious documents, and actions taken by church congregations inserted into newspapers often told of the quality of the sermons.[34] The reports could also be politically motivated, and as disharmony with England grew in America, ministers increasingly, according to sermons and

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26. Patricia U. Bonomi and Peter R. Eisenstadt, "Church Adherence in the Eighteenth-Century British American Colonies," *William and Mary Quarterly* 39 (1982): 245-86, cited in Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven, 220.*
27. *American Weekly Mercury* (Philadelphia), 16 October 1735, 2.
28. Ibid., 28 May 1730, 3; and *Virginia Gazette* (Williamsburg, Dixon, and Hunter), 23 December 1775, 4.
29. *Pennsylvania Journal, or Weekly Advertiser* (Philadelphia), 19 September 1745, 3.
30. *Parker's New-York Gazette; or the Weekly Post-Boy,* 24 December 1760, 3.
31. *Story & Humphrey's Pennsylvania Mercury; and the Universal Advertiser* (Philadelphia), 20 October 1775, 1.
32. *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), 16 July 1730, 1.
33. *Boston Gazette,* 13 January 1734-35, 3.
34. See, for example, *Boston News-Letter,* 24 April 1740, 2 and *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), 18 September 1740, 3.

hymns in colonial newspapers, turned their efforts toward affirming and supporting revolt against English rule. Following the Boston Massacre and the growing troubles with England, the *Providence Gazette* noted in a hymn entitled "The CHRISTIAN SOLDIER," that "the GREAT CAPTAIN you have chose Never did a Battle lose."[35] Sermons printed in newspapers even made it appear that God mandated both fighting against England and obeying the Continental Congress. Dunlap's *Maryland Gazette* ran a sermon in July 1775 calling on God to "Save us not this Day" if the colonies were in transgression against the will of God in rebelling against England. Far from being against the will of God, the sermon reckoned, Americans had "raised with an express view to perpetuate the name and glory of that sacred altar" of God on which love of country and liberty were what God wanted for his people.[36]

While religious sermons were politically inspired in America, political actions were religiously motivated according to the news of colonial papers, although religion played a larger part in political activities in the first third of the century. Legislation, according to colonial newspapers, addressed moral issues and made everything from selection of ministers to recreation activities a religiously motivated political issue. When a Springfield, Massachusetts, church lost its preacher, it selected a new one according to "Province Law."[37] In 1730, Massachusetts Governor Jonathan Belcher not only outlawed the playing of any games on Sunday, he also mandated that all citizens attend church and be imprisoned if found cursing, drinking, or being lewd on Sunday. The governor said:

> I do hereby strictly prohibit all His Majesty's Subjects of this Province of what Degree or Quality soever, from Playing on the LORD's DAY at any Game whatsoever; and do hereby Command and Require them decently and reverendly to attend the publick Worship of GOD on every LORD's DAY, on pain of the highest Displeasure of this His Majesty's Government. . . . I do hereby strictly Charge and Command all Judges . . . to be very Vigilant and Strict in the Discovery and effectual prosecution and punishment of all Persons, who shall be guilty of Blasphemy, prophane Cursing and Swearing Prophaning the LORD's DAY, excessive Drinking, Lewdness, or other dissolute and disorderly Practices: And they take care effectually to suppress all Lewd Houses, publick Gaming-Houses and Places, and other Disorderly Houses.[38]

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35. *Providence Gazette; and Country Journal,* 12 May 1770, 2 (emphasis included).
36. *Dunlap's Maryland Gazette; or the Baltimore General Advertiser,* 25 July 1775, 1.
37. *Boston Evening-Post,* 1 December 1735, 2.
38. *American Weekly Mercury* (Philadelphia), 22 October 1730, 1 (emphasis included).

In 1705 the "Profanation of the LORD's DAY" was decried in Massachusetts,[39] and in 1775 activities on Sunday were still considered a violation of religious and civil law, according to a letter written to the *Connecticut Journal*:

> THE Sunday before last as I was going to church, I observed a number of men sawing wood near the Governor's gate; and as I returned from church, several persons were skating on a pond in the common. Surely these things ought not to be. I hope in the future the civil officers, as well as others, will pay more attention to his Excellency's proclamation *against immorality.*[40]

Although most of the religiously motivated laws that appeared in colonial newspapers were passed in New England, all colonial governments issued decrees calling for religious acts by their citizens. From *Publick Occurrences* in 1690 onward, governments regularly in the eighteenth century dispensed calls for "a day of solemn FAST, PRAYER, AND HUMILIATION before Almighty God" to the people of the colonies through colonial newspapers.[41]

Whenever newspapers commented on the results of a day of fasting and prayer, they were speaking of God's hand in the workings of the people. This providential intervention is what almost all of the calls for fasting, prayer, and thanksgiving sought. The calls for public religious days by colonial governments only confirm the fact that religion was an indelible part of everyday colonial life. These public days of worship point to yet another feature of religious news in colonial newspapers — the intervention of God in the lives of his people.

God's Providence

When Benjamin Harris listed his reasons for beginning a newspaper, the very first one was so "That Memorable Occurrents of Divine Providence may not be neglected or forgotten, as they too often are."[42] Colonial citizens looked upon many of the events that took place within the confines of their world as

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39. *Boston News-Letter,* 19 March 1705, 1 (emphasis included).
40. *Connecticut Journal, and New-Haven Post-Boy,* 25 January 1775, 4 (emphasis included).
41. *Cape Fear Mercury* (Wilmington), 28 July 1775, 2 (emphasis included). The examples of such calls issued in colonial newspapers are extensive. Governments, for example, called for days of prayer for relief from Native Americans and disease, *South-Carolina Gazette* (Charleston), 12 April 1760, 1; to gain assistance in war, *Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis), 6 February 1755, 3; and to show appreciation for successfully surviving another year, *New-England Weekly Journal* (Boston), 2 November 1730, 1.
42. *Boston Publick Occurrences*, 25 September 1690, 1.

divine intervention — the supernatural affecting their own physical world.[43] Calls for days of public fasting and prayer were a way that colonial governments attempted to use the collective power of the people either to get God to intercede for them in times of trouble or to thank God for already providing that assistance. In fact, Pennsylvania's governor declared in 1755 that keeping the people apprised of God's providence was the responsibility of government. In a call for a day of fasting and prayer, the governor's decree stated:

> WHEREAS it is the Duty of every Government to keep alive among the People a just Sense of their entire Dependence on the Providence of Almighty GOD, and to remind them of the intimate Connection between the Divine Favour and Publick Happiness, between National Calamity and National Vice; in order thereby to propagate that since Love of Religion and Virtue, which, under the Christian Dispensation, is the great Means of recommending a people to the Favour and Protection of Heaven . . . I have . . . thought fit to appoint . . . a Day of publick Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer.[44]

God, according to colonial newspaper reports, could work for or against people in any manner he chose. God's intercession, for example, took place when a pair of birds dove into the ocean for no apparent reason, according to an account in the *Boston Gazette* in 1735. The actions of the birds were credited to God because a poverty-stricken worker, Silas Remmington, immediately paddled out in his canoe and snatched the stunned birds from the water so that he might supply his family with a meal. He carried them home to his wife who promptly cooked them. The news item concluded with a neighbor asking Remmington's wife if she was not afraid to eat the birds. "No Reply'd the Woman, we are poor People and GOD has sent 'em us."[45]

Even though God was credited with demonstrations of his favor toward people, like the good fortune of the Remmingtons who were delivered from hunger by the meal from God, most newspaper stories that spoke of God's providence referred to God's judgment upon a sinful people. When bad events happened for which people could find no logical solution, an angry God often became the perpetrator. Earthquakes in 1750 and 1755 were blamed directly on sinful people being punished by an angry God. In 1750, a *Boston Gazette* story concerning an earthquake noted "that it is every man's duty to give attention to all warnings which God in his mercy affords to a sinful people; such warnings we have had by two great shocks of an earthquake."[46] When Boston buildings

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43. Numerous examples of beliefs in supernatural occurrences in colonial America exist. Many are discussed in David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). Fischer discusses these under the term "magic ways."
44. *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), 12 June 1775, 1.
45. *Boston Gazette,* 3 February 1735, 3.
46. *Boston Gazette, or Weekly Journal,* 22 May 1750, 1.

shook and chimneys crashed to the ground in 1755 from another earthquake, a writer to the *Gazette* said:

> Doubtless various natural Causes may be assigned for these extraordinary Convulsions; but surely no one will question the Agency of the supreme Power, who maketh the Earth to tremble, and whose Voice Shaketh the Wilderness — If so inconsiderable a Circumstance as the falling of a Sparrow to the Ground, is not without the Notice of our heavenly Father . . . it cannot be suppos'd, that such terrible Events, as the laying Waste large & populous Cities, which has been frequently occasion'd by Earthquakes, should happen, without his special Influence and Direction.[47]

Natural causes may have been to blame, but God put them into action, the writer explained in the next edition of the *Gazette*. Since the earthquake occurred on a Sunday, the writer speculated, God in his "infinite Wisdom" caused "natural and moral Causes [to] coincide." "I submit it," the letter writer concluded, "Whether it Be not rational to suppose that natural Causes operated to Effect at that Juncture, to awaken us to a more strict Observance of that holy Day."[48]

The entrance of the terms "natural Causes" and "rational" into the discussion of God's providence was important. During the eighteenth century, Enlightenment thought began to question the concept of God's hand in any human activity. Deist thought, which was inspired by writings such as John Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity*, did not deny the existence of God or that he created the world. Instead, these rational thinkers believed that the law of nature now functioned as the controller of events. Events had to be explained through natural causes, not through God waving his hand and causing earthquakes to shake the foundations of cities or birds to fall from the sky to provide sustenance for hungry people.[49]

Even though rational thought became the favored stance of many in colonial America, its proponents never completely discredited the providential news items in newspapers, especially when one considers the amount of news about religious revival and George Whitefield that ran in colonial newspapers. Whitefield provided copy for newspapers, and without a doubt Whitefield was seen by many as a man sent by God. As a New York writer, whose poem appeared in the *Virginia Gazette* in 1740 noted about Whitefield, "He comes commission'd from on High." For the next thirty years, God was working

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47. *Boston Gazette,* 24 November 1725, 1 (emphasis included).
48. *Boston Gazette, or Country Journal,* 1 December 1755, 1.
49. J.D. Douglas, ed. *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), s.v. "Deism," by J.W. Charley; and Henry F. May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 122-23. The best example used to explain deism comes from the fourteenth century. God is portrayed as a clockmaker who creates a watch, winds it up, and then leaves it to run on its own.

directly in America, according to the thought of many such as the writer from New York quoted in Virginia, because of the presence of an itinerant preacher, George Whitefield.

George Whitefield

Everything about George Whitefield was "big news" in colonial newspapers. As Benjamin Franklin's wife wrote to him in 1770 concerning Whitefield's death, "You will see all a bought him in the Papers."[50] The same was true of Whitefield from the moment he arrived in America and began preaching. The amount of press coverage that Whitefield received may be attributed to several factors. First, religion was important in the lives of colonial Americans. Whitefield offered a powerful religious message. Second, Whitefield provided ample opportunities for people to hear him. It is estimated that he preached 18,000 times during his lifetime. A large number of those sermons were delivered in America and most Americans had at least one opportunity to hear him speak.[51] Finally, much of the news in papers concerning Whitefield was the product of good public relations. Whitefield traveled with an entourage, and at least during his first preaching tour in 1740, his companion William Seward wrote news accounts of Whitefield's revivals and submitted them to newspapers where Whitefield was currently preaching and to the newspapers in the next major city that he planned to visit.[52] For these reasons, the activities of Whitefield were in the news.

From 1739 to his death in 1770, Whitefield made seven preaching trips to the colonies. As Harry S. Stout correctly pointed out, with Whitefield "a new form of mass communications appeared in which people were encouraged — even commanded — to speak out concerning the great work of grace in their souls. . . . The audience thrilled not only to the gospel message it heard but also to their own great power visibly manifested in mass assembly."[53] Because Whitefield produced this kind of response in people, Isaiah Thomas said of him in *The History of Printing in America:*

> This celebrated itinerant preacher, when he visited America, like a comet drew the attention of all classes of people. This

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50. Quoted in Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 286.
51. Ibid., xiii-xiv.
52. David A. Copeland, "Covering the Big Story: George Whitefield's First Preaching Tour, News Manipulation, and the Colonial Press," Paper presented at the American Journalism Historians Association annual convention, Lawrence, Kansas, 1992, 13-14. The activities of Seward on the part of Whitefield are also discussed in Frank Lambert, " 'Pedlar of Divinity': George Whitefield and the Great Awakening," *Journal of American History* 77 (1990): 835; and Stout, *The Divine Dramatist, 77.*
53. Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 193-194.

> blaze of ministration was extended through the continent, and he became the common topic of conversation from Georgia to New Hampshire. All the newspapers were filled with paragraphs of information respecting him, or with pieces of animated disputation pro or con.[54]

News of George Whitefield changed the priorities of news content in colonial newspapers. With Whitefield, news started to focus more on items of local or intercolonial significance. News of Whitefield's activities in Charleston, Williamsburg, New York, and Boston, for example, became news with which the citizens of Philadelphia were concerned, in addition to reports of Whitefield's activities in the Pennsylvania city. Whitefield not only changed the priorities of what was in colonial newspapers, he also changed the nature of the other material printed by colonial printers, no doubt based in part on the interest in Whitefield newspaper articles produced. In 1738, there were a total of 133 imprints made by colonial printers, only fifty-six of which were on religious topics. By the end of 1741, the total number of imprints had grown to 241, and 146 of those printings dealt with religious subjects. Religious imprints had grown from slightly more than 40 percent of the total publications to slightly more than 60 percent of all publications.[55]

With such intense interest in religious news in general and in Whitefield in particular, it was only natural that all eleven colonial newspapers that were being printed in 1740 carried items on Whitefield's preaching, his message, and the controversy that he spawned. The *Pennsylvania Gazette,* however, carried the most thorough coverage of the Anglican preacher. That may have been because Whitefield and *Gazette* printer Benjamin Franklin were friends,[56] because Philadelphia was more centrally located, served as Whitefield's base of American operations, and received more information on Whitefield, or it may have been because Franklin was a better newsman than his contemporaries, realizing Whitefield was current news of immense interest to readers. All three reasons are probably true.

Whenever possible during 1740 — which was usually weekly — the *Pennsylvania Gazette* issued announcements about Whitefield that told where the revivalist was currently preaching, the number of people who heard him, the amount of money that had been raised for the proposed orphanage in Savannah, and his itinerary for the upcoming days. Typical of those news items was one that appeared in April 1740. It said:

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54. Isaiah Thomas, *The History of Printing in America* (1810, reprint, New York: Weathervane Books, 1970), 568.

55. Figures taken from the bibliographic listings in Charles Evans, *American Bibliography* (Chicago, 1904), 2: 109-326; and Roger P. Bristol, *Supplement to Charles Evans' American Bibliography* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1970), 58-78.

56. Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin.,* ed. J.A. Leo Lemay and P.M. Zall (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981), 105-06.

> The middle of last Month the Rev. Mr. WHITEFIELD was at Charleston, and preached there five Times, and collected at one Sermon Seventy Pounds Sterling, for the Benefit of the Orphan-House in Georgia; And on Sunday last . . . he landed at New-Castle, where he preached Morning and Evening. On Monday Morning he preach'd to about 3000 at Wilmington, and in the Evening arrived in this City: on Tuesday Evening he preach'd to about 8000 on Society-Hill. . . . Tomorrow Morning he preaches at Whitemarsh, and in the Evening at Germantown.[57]

The numbers of people who heard Whitefield preach at one time may have been the most remarkable of the news about the 1740 preaching tour. The *Pennsylvania Gazette* reported that fifteen thousand heard Whitefield's farewell sermon in New York,[58] while the *New-England Weekly Journal* put the number in attendance at Whitefield's farewell discourse on Boston's common at twenty-three thousand.[59] Franklin, after attending one Whitefield's outdoor revivals, estimated that more than thirty thousand could have heard Whitefield speak at any one time because of his powerful voice.[60] Such extraordinary claims for those who heard Whitefield preach were challenged by his adversaries. An angry writer to the *Pennsylvania Gazette* charged that the number of people reported attending a Whitefield sermon "are always exaggerated, being often doubled and sometimes trebled."[61] A letter from Charleston that ran in the *New-York Weekly Journal* said that many of the reports of Whitefield's preaching that had come from South Carolina were lies because the itinerant was in meetings with members of the Anglican church when he was reported to have been traveling the colony preaching.[62] Not only were the numbers in attendance and the amount of times that Whitefield had preached lies, letter writers said, but so, too, was much that Whitefield had to say. An angry writer to the *South-Carolina Gazette* insisted that Whitefield was nothing more than a liar out for his own gain.[63]

The issue of how many people actually heard Whitefield preach was but a small part of the controversy surrounding the itinerant preacher in 1740 that found its way into colonial newspapers. Whitefield, the *South-Carolina Gazette* reported, angered Anglicans in South Carolina when the visiting preacher, himself a Church of England minister, refused to use the Church's liturgy to

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57. *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), 17 April 1740, 3.
58. Ibid., 23 October 1740, 2.
59. *New-England Weekly Journal* (Boston), 14 October 1740, 2.
60. Franklin, *Autobiography,* 107.
61. *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), 1 May 1740, 1. The numbers that were listed in newspapers for those in attendance at a Whitefield sermon were only estimates, and the numbers in colonial newspapers, Whitefield's *Journals,* and in the diary of Whitefield's traveling public relations man, William Seward, do not always agree. See Copeland, "Covering the Big Story," 15-17.
62. *New-York Weekly Journal,* 25 August 1740, 2.
63. *South-Carolina Gazette* (Charleston), 9 October 1740, 1.

conduct services,[64] something Whitefield also did when passing through Virginia.[65] Whitefield further alienated Anglicans by attacking Archbishop John Tillotson, whose preaching and theology were greatly copied by English preachers in the eighteenth century. Whitefield charged that the Archbishop, who died in 1694, knew no more about Christianity than Mahommed.[66] These charges led to Whitefield being banned from the Anglican pulpit in Philadelphia,[67] something no newspaper reported. Whitefield alienated large numbers of Southerners when he issued a letter "to the Inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina" calling their practice of owning slaves a sin against God.[68]

In May 1740, the validity of the news surrounding Whitefield was again brought into question. A news item in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* reported:

> Since Mr. Whitefield's Preaching here, the Dancing School, Assembly and Concert Room have been shut up, as inconsistent with the Doctrine of the Gospel: An though the Gentleman concern'd caus'd the Door to be broke open again, we are inform'd that no Company came the last Assembly Night.[69]

The next week, a letter appeared accusing William Seward, Whitefield's traveling companion, of sealing the doors and writing the news item to further Whitefield's purposes on return to England. The biting letter charged that Seward

> shut up the Door of the Concert Room . . . on the 16th of April. No one can wonder at his low Craft, in getting this Paragraph foisted into the News Papers just before his Departure for England, in order to carry it along with him, and spread his Master's Fame. . . . Nor is this the only Instance of Misrepresentation in Favour of Mr. Whitefield's Success. . . . And considering that these Accounts are said to be put in the Papers by themselves, are they not a further Specimen of their little Regard to Truth? Nay, are they not a Demonstration that

64. Ibid., 21 August 1740, 3.
65. *Virginia Gazette* (Williamsburg), 18 January 1740, 1.
66. "A Letter from the Rev. Mr. WHITEFIELD, at Georgia, to a Friend in London," *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), 10 April 1740, 1; and *New-York Gazette,* 19 May 1740, 1.
67. George Whitefield, *Journals, 1737-1741,* with an introduction by William V. Davis (Gainesville, Fla.: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1969), 404.
68. *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), 17 April 1740, 1. The letter was also printed and distributed throughout the colonies.
69. Ibid., 1 May 1740, 3.

> these Men have other Designs in View than are agreeable to their Pre-tenses?[70]

The controversy in Philadelphia continued throughout May with Franklin himself getting into the fray and admitting that he inserted the news item on Whitefield at the insistence of Seward. Franklin even admitted that the story may not have been true:

> In my last at the Request of Mr. Seward, I inserted an Article of News, relating to the shutting up of the Concert Room, &c . . . for tho' the Article allow'd to be literally true, yet by the Manner of Expression 'tis thought to insinuate something that is not, viz. That the Gentlemen forbore meeting in the Night mentioned, thinking such Entertainments inconsistent with the Doctrine of the Gospel.[71]

The controversy over the dance hall also appeared in newspapers in Boston[72] and Charleston.[73]

The concert hall controversy produced negative publicity for Whitefield but nothing like the turmoil and trouble that awaited the twenty-five-year-old preacher in Boston. Whitefield arrived in Boston on 18 September and immediately began to preach in the churches and common areas of the Massachusetts city.[74] A week later, an afternoon sermon was planned for the Reverend Mr. Checkley's meeting house. Instead of hearing a sermon, the people were greeted with tragedy, and newspapers all over colonial America picked up the report, described in vivid detail by Thomas Fleet in the *Boston Evening-Post:*

> Last Monday about Four O'Clock after Noon, a most melancholy and surprising Accident happen'd here, viz. The Rev. Mr. Whitefield being to preach in the Rev. Mr. Checkley's Meeting-House, the People crowded so thick into it, that before the Time of Mr. Whitefield's coming, the Galleries were so thronged, that many People apprehended some Danger of their falling; and being thus pre-posses'd with Fear, and a Board on which several People stood, breaking, the

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70. Ibid., 8 May 1740, 2.
71. Ibid. For more on the dance hall controversy, see J.A. Leo Lemay, *The Canon of Benjamin Franklin, 1722-1776* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1986), 96-103.
72. *Boston Evening-Post,* 12 May 1740, 4.
73. *South-Carolina Gazette* (Charleston), 18 July 1740, 3.
74. *Boston Evening-Post,* 22 September 1740, 2; *Boston Gazette* 22 September 1740, 2; *Boston News-Letter,* 25 September 1740, 2; *Boston Weekly Post-Boy,* 22 September 1740, 3; and *New-England Weekly Journal* (Boston), 23 September 1740, 2.

> Word was soon given by some ignorant and disorderly persons, that the Galleries gave Way; upon which the whole Congregation was immediately thrown into the utmost Confusion and Disorder, and each one being desirous to save themselves, some jump' d from the Galleries into the Pews and Allies below, others threw themselves out at the Windows, and those below pressing hard to get out at the Porch Doors, many (especially women) were thrown down and trod upon by those that were crowding out, no Regard had to the terrible Screeches and Outcries of those in Danger of their Lives, or other; so that a great Number were sore wounded and bruised, and many had their Bones broke: Two married Women, viz. Mrs. Story and Mrs. Ingersole, and Servant Lad were so crush'd that they died a few Minutes after.[75]

Fleet followed the news item with an acerbic editorial comment, "And this morning the Rev. Mr. Whitefield set out on his Progress to the Eastward, so that the Town is in a hopeful Way of being restor'd to its former State of Order, Peace, and Industry."[76] Fleet's comment about Whitefield's unsettling ways brought an attack printed in the next edition of the *Boston Weekly News-Letter,*[77] to which Fleet responded in his next edition by saying he meant no disrespect to Whitefield.[78] Regardless of Fleet's intention, the war between pro- and anti-Whitefield forces was now in full force in Boston, and no doubt the anti-Whitefield forces were fueled by the preacher's seeming lack of concern for those killed in the Checkley incident that was made known when Whitefield's *Journal* was printed and made available to the public.[79]

The controversy in Boston escalated again in 1745 when Whitefield returned, and the anti-Whitefield elements continued to find an open line of

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75. *Boston Evening-Post,* 29 September 1740, 2. The report of the tragedy also appeared in these newspapers: *American Weekly Mercury* (Philadelphia), 9 October 1740, 2; *Boston New-Letter,* 25 September 1740, 2; *New-York Weekly Journal,* 13 October 1740, 3; *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), 9 October 1740, 2; and *South-Carolina Gazette* (Charleston), 6 November 1740, 3. The *Boston News-Letter's* account of the Checkley incident left out such editorial comments as "some ignorant and disorderly persons" and that those crowding out had "no Regard" for those that were being injured. The *New-England Weekly Journal* didn't mention the incident, and issues of the *Boston Weekly Post-Boy* are not extant for the week of September 29 through the rest of 1740.

76. Ibid.

77. *Boston Weekly News-Letter,* 2 October 1740, 1.

78. *Boston Evening-Post,* 6 October 1740, 2.

79. In his journal, Whitefield gave his account of what happened at the Rev. Mr. Checkley's church. Then, without any mention of sorrow, he said, "God was pleased to give me presence of mind; so that I gave notice I would immediately preach upon the common. The weather was wet, but many thousand followed into the field." Whitefield, *Journals,* 462.

communication through the *Boston Evening-Post*.[80] The *Evening-Post* reported that a concerted effort was being made in Boston to keep Whitefield out of the pulpits of local churches. "Last Friday Evening," the paper informed its readers, "Mr. Whitefield preach'd the Lecture at the Old-South Meeting-House for Mr. Prince, notwithstanding his Promise not to invite Mr. Whitefield into his Pulpit. . . . We hear that a Man at Topsfield has lately been presented for breaking into the Meeting House . . . and letting in Mr. Whitefield."[81] Other newspapers, like the *Boston Gazette,* defended Whitefield against the negative news that they had "seen in the *Evening-Post*."[82]

One of the great controversies surrounding Whitefield in 1745 centered on the dividing of religious groups, something that was blamed on him in colonial newspapers by letter writers and was the reason why so many churches closed their doors to him. A writer to the *Boston Evening-Post* said "that Mr. Whitefield has been the great Instrument of causing the Divisions and Separations which have disturbed and rent in Pieces so many of the Churches of this Land." Another writer, whose letter appeared in the same edition, said that neither Whitefield or any "New-Light" that followed him was "a true Christian." And a final letter writer in the *Evening-Post* noted that Whitefield's use of meeting houses helped divide the people and proved that Whitefield would lie to achieve his purposes.[83]

By August 1745, the *Boston Evening-Post* noted that the religious controversy in New England had subsided a great deal.[84] The reason for the easing of tensions rested on the fact that Whitefield had left for Philadelphia.[85] With the end of 1745 and Whitefield's impending return to England, the great religious controversies surrounding him subsided in America. Whitefield returned to the colonies again in 1747, 1751, 1755, 1765, and 1770, but no great controversy surrounding the minister occurred during those preaching tours that took place during the years of this study, although newspapers reported on Whitefield's presence and his preaching during each of those revival tours.[86]

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80. Fleet's dislike of Whitefield was fueled, in addition to the incident in the Checkley church, by his personal aversion to ministers. Thomas, *The History of Printing in America,* 94, reports that Fleet's dislike for the clergy necessitated his emigration from England after he exhibited a display of contempt for the Church of England in 1711.

81. *Boston Evening-Post,* 8 April 1745, 2.

82. *Boston Gazette, or Weekly Journal,* 8 January 1745, 1. The *Gazette* carried negative news on Whitefield on page one as well.

83. *Boston Evening-Post,* 11 March 1745, 1, 2.

84. Ibid., 12 August 1745, 1.

85. *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), 12 September 1745, 2.

86. Many examples exist in colonial newspapers of news items concerning each of these preaching tours. Examples of news about Whitefield and his preaching tours that took place in the years of this study may be found in the following: *Connecticut Gazette* (New Haven), 19 April 1755, 3. Whitefield leaves Charleston for England; *Georgia Gazette* (Savannah), 9 May 1765, 4, Whitefield arrives in Georgia; and *South-Carolina and American General Gazette* (Charleston), 18 July 1770, 2, Whitefield preaches to the student body at Princetown, now Princeton University.

Whitefield did make one more tremendous splash across the pages of colonial newspapers, but it took his death to accomplish that feat. The orator, who had come to America as a bold twenty-five-year-old spark plug, was now sixty-five. Asthma continually bothered him, and after a prayer session in Newburyport, Massachusetts, he retired to his room, opened the window to get a bit of air, sat down, and died. The same newspaper that had been Whitefield's great nemesis in 1745, the *Boston Evening-Post,* proclaimed:

> It is questionable whether any one since the days of the Apostles, or even they, had more hearers, he having delivered above seventeen thousand Discourses, to five, ten, fifteen, & twenty thousand persons at a time, both in Europe & America. — He kept up his zeal and popularity to the last discourse, which he delivered the day before before his death to an audience of at least six thousand in open air. . . He seem'd to have a clear view of the entertainments of another life; and would commonly converse so familiarly of death, as tho' he was a kind friend he was waiting for, and even long'd to receive the summons; and was unwilling to tarry here any longer than he could be serviceable to mankind.— Such was the character of the Person whose departure we lament.[87]

At least fifteen thousand people, the *Connecticut Journal* reported, attended Whitefield's funeral,[88] and his obituary ran in papers throughout colonial America.[89]

By the end of Whitefield's thirty-year preaching affair with America, everyone in the colonies knew of the man and his ministry. The face of religion had changed in America during the period of Whitefield's relation with the colonies. Whitefield believed strongly in a free conscience in worshipping God, and his preaching no doubt helped to strengthen the concept of religious liberty in America.

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87. *Boston Evening-Post,* 8 October 1770, 3.
88. *Connecticut Journal, and New-Haven Post-Boy,* 26 October 1770, 2.
89. Whitefield's obituary or a news story about this death appeared in the following: *Boston Gazette, and Country Journal,* 8 October 1770, 2; *Massachusetts Gazette* (Boston), 11 October 1770, 4; *Green & Russell's Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser,* 8 October 1770, 2; *Connecticut Courant* (Hartford), 9 October 1770, 2; *Connecticut Journal, and New-Haven Post-Boy,* 26 October 1770, 2; *Essex Gazette* (Salem, Mass.), 9 October 1770, 3; *New-York Journal; or the General Advertiser,* 11 October 1770, 3; *Massachusetts Spy* (Boston), 9 October 1770, 2; *New-London Gazette,* 12 October 1770, 3; *New-York Gazette; and the Weekly Mercury,* 8 October 1770, 2; *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), 11 October 1770, 3; *South-Carolina and American General Gazette* (Charleston), 23 October 1770, 2; *South-Carolina Gazette* (Charleston), 8 November 1770, 4; and *South-Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal* (Charleston), 6 November 1770, 2.

Religious Liberty

The colonial record of religious liberty as found in newspapers makes it obvious that religious liberty and toleration of various sects were relative concepts thoughout much of eighteenth-century America. As the writer to the *Providence Gazette* pointed out in 1770, some colonies claimed that the free choice of religion was available to all of its citizens, but in reality, the people of the colony were forced to support a state church or risk the loss of their personal property.[90] The treatment of Roman Catholics is also a prime example that talk of religious liberty and its application were understood in terms of Protestants only. Few people in colonial America believed in religious liberty in the manner of Roger Williams who advocated complete religious freedom for Roman Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, and even atheists.[91] Most Americans instead believed as Williams' contemporary John Milton did. "This is more Christian," Milton wrote in *Areopagetica,* "that many be tolerated, rather than all compelled. I mean not tolerated popery and open superstition, which, as it extirpates all religions and civil supremacies, so itself should be extirpate."[92] Milton placed limits upon religious toleration, and so did most colonial Americans. There was a continual suppression of new religious groups and ideas throughout the colonial period, according to newspapers.

Despite the fact that intolerance existed, the acceptance of liberty of conscience in colonial America did make inroads, and the move toward the freedom of religion later found in the Constitution's First Amendment is chronicled in the acts of colonies and religious groups in colonial newspapers. The fact that news articles about the suppression and intolerance of groups such as Catholics and Methodists ran concurrently with articles calling for religious liberty and with reports of acts of freedom of conscience supported by colonial governments only confirms the fact that the concept of complete separation of church and state was an evolving process, one that did not reach full maturity in the colonial period.

Intolerance was a by-product of fear and misunderstanding and as has been seen in the case of Roman Catholics produced an almost universal call for the suppression of free worship in colonial America so long as "papists" were involved. But colonial newspapers ran articles that demonstrated that Protestants in America were often intolerant of other Protestants as well. This intolerance occurred because all religious groups viewed one another through a strict "conception of true Christianity" that generally disavowed the validity of any other understanding of true Christianity.[93] Considering this fact, it is

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90. *Providence Gazette; and Country Journal,* 13 October 1770, 2.
91. Roger Williams, *The Bloudy Tenant of Persecution for Cause of Conscience Discussed in a Conference Between Peace and Truth* (London, 1644), 134.
92. John Milton, *Aeropagitica: A Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing to the Parliament of England* (London, 1644), 134.
93. J. Sears McGee, *The Godly Man in Stuart England: Anglican, Puritans, and the Two Tables, 1620-1670* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976), 2.

remarkable that any religious toleration ever was granted during the colonial period.

The strong theological lens through which various religious groups viewed life led to numerous confrontations, which were aimed at suppression. Anglicans attacked Presbyterians in 1707, the *Boston News-Letter* reported.[94] In Providence, Rhode Isalnd, Presbyterians were the target of an attack upon their meeting house in 1725. Just who the perpetrators were was not known by the correspondent who reported the event, but whoever sought to stop the Presbyterians did so by putting "a stinking Sturgeon of about 8 Foot in Length" in the pulpit during the middle of the week. The rotting fish successfully ended the Presbyterian worship for the week because "it was so much corrupted and putrified, that it swarm'd with Vermine, and caused such a nausious Stench, that the People could not assemble in the Meeting House."[95] Quakers disrupted an Anglican service in Boston, and a Quaker minister — one Anne Flower — refused to let the Anglican minister speak, insinuating that he and his religion did not possess the true spirit.[96] And Congregationalists in New England suppressed the religion of Baptists[97] and Quakers.[98]

Other than the extremely strong aversion for Catholics, Methodists appeared to be the most detested religious group during the colonial period, according to colonial newspapers. The dislike for Methodism may have grown from the fact that John and Charles Wesley's method called for a change within the Anglican church, and religious beliefs that challenge or alter current practices generally evoke hostility. It may have stemmed from the ties between the Wesleys and George Whitefield, whose own evangelical system was highly disliked by many churchmen. Whatever the reason, Methodism added yet another lens for theological understanding in the eighteenth century, and as a new form of Protestantism it raised the ire of many other groups.

Methodism's formative period, 1738-1744, coincided with the Great Awakening in America,[99] and attacks upon the Wesleyan movement began during this period. Riots took place in London, a 1740 newspaper report stated, after one Methodist called the Anglican church "the Scarlet Whore, prophesied of in the Revelations."[100] Usually, however, the news reports on Methodists categorized them as foolish in matters of religion or as disrupters of the commonweal. The *New-York Weekly Journal* reported that the Methodist message had ruined the woolen industry in London.[101] A Methodist minister in

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94. *Boston News-Letter,* 25 August 1701, 2.
95. *New-England Courant* (Boston), 10 July 1725, 2; and *American Weekly Mercury* (Philadelphia), 22 July 1725, 3.
96. *Boston Evening-Post,* 15 December 1735, 1.
97. *Pennsylvania Chronicle, and Universal Advertiser* (Philadelphia), 19 March 1770, 1.
98. *New-York Weekly Journal,* 12 May 1740, 2.
99. Frederick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism: A History of the United Methodists and Their Relations* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), 32.
100. *Boston Evening-Post,* 10 November 1740, 2.
101. *New-York Weekly Journal,* 31 March 1740, 4.

Charleston was jailed for laying "dangerous Plots against this Province," the *South-Carolina Gazette* noted.[102] Methodists were often made to look foolish in papers,[103] and an *Essex Gazette* news story intimated that a convert had fallen prey to a demonic evil in order to accomplish the Methodist conversion.[104]

Even though little tolerance appeared to be shown for Methodists and some other religious groups, newspapers indicated that religious freedom was indeed making inroads in America. A strong statement on the concept of freedom of conscience appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* in 1730. The essay stated:

> Every Man has a Right, a divine Right to interpret for himself. . . . If you consider what terrible Work the different Sentiments about the Meaning of certain texts have occasioned; how piously Christians, as they have affected to call themselves, have cut one anothers Throats by Turns, about hard words, and Sounds without Sense; if you consider, for how many Ages the most absurd Tenets have been forced upon mankind, and all who could not believe, or were not wicked enough to say they believed were burnt here, and doomed to eternal Flames hereafter. . . . A Spirit of liberty is growing amonst us.[105]

Toleration did make gains in the colonies during the middle third of the eighteenth century, and newspapers reported these small victories along the path to religious liberty. Jews were granted religious toleration in Pennsylvania in 1740.[106] Quakers, who had been hanged in Massachusetts a century earlier, applied to the Boston selectmen for the use of Faneuil Hall for a meeting. The request was granted according to a newspaper account, and both the positive response to the request and the sermon preached met "the Satisfaction of People of all Denominations."[107]

The final push for religious liberty prior to the Revolution came from Baptists, who never gained full liberty of conscience during the colonial period, at least in New England. Baptists, under the guidance of Issac Backus, mounted a political campaign against paying support for churches in Massachusetts. Backus, recalling the writings of his Baptist forefather Roger Williams, sought a

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102. *South-Carolina Gazette* (Charleston), 13 May 1745, 2.
103. See, for example, *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), 2 August 1750, 1; *Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis), 22 August 1750, 3; and *Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis), 31 January 1765, 1.
104. *Essex Gazette* (Salem, Mass.), 6 February 1770, 2. The same news item also appeared in the *Virginia Gazette* (Williamsburg), 8 March 1770, 2.
105. *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), 30 July 1730, 2. A similar essay appeared in the *American Weekly Mercury* (Philadelphia), 25 June 1730, 1.
106. *American Weekly Mercury* (Philadelphia), 17 July 1740, 1.
107. *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), 21 August 1755, 3.

complete separation of church and state.[108] In 1770, an announcement that appeared in the *Providence Gazette*, presented the Baptists' plan for ending the Massachusetts Bay system of taxes to support churches.[109]

By carrying essays on religious toleration and reports on the efforts of some religious groups to establish complete religious liberty in America, colonial newspapers demonstrated that sensitivity to the religious beliefs of others was slowly becoming a part of colonial life. In printing part of the proceedings of the Continental Congress in 1775, the *Essex Journal* related a debate in that body over religious beliefs and how the new government could be sensitive to those beliefs and still begin a war. The congressional debate declared:

> As there are some people, who from religious principles cannot bear arms in any case, this Congress intend no violence to their consciences, but earnestly recommend it to them to contribute liberally in this time of universal calamity to the relief of their distressed brethren in the several colonies, and to do all other services to their oppressed country, which they can consistent with their religious principles.[110]

Intolerance and tolerance stood juxtaposed in colonial newspapers and in the mindset of colonial citizens. Even though religious tolerance was not yet the law of the land, newspapers present a portrait of a people torn between upholding their own beliefs, which they were certain were correct, and allowing others to espouse a religious position to which they could not agree.

Conclusion

Religion was an important subject to Americans of the colonial period, as the religious news in colonial newspapers demonstrates. Religious implications were applied to news of war and natural disasters. Sermons, ordination notices, and hymns appeared regularly on the pages of newspapers.

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108. H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987), 255-65. A Complete discussion of Baptists and religious liberty may be found in William R. Estep, *Revolution Within the Revolution: The First Amendment in Historical Context, 1612-1789* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990).

109. *Providence Gazette; and Country Journal,* 11 August 1770, 3. Other newspapers and writers to them supported Baptist efforts from 1770 on. See, for example, *Pennsylvania Chronicle, and universal Advertiser* (Philadelphia), 19 March 1770, 1; and *Essex Journal: or, the New-Hampshire Packet* (Newbury-Port, Mass.), 18 August 1775, 2. It should be noted that the Baptists' efforts to completely separate church and state relations in Massachusetts were not completely successful. In fact, it was not until 1833 that Massachusetts removed completely the concept of an established religion from its state constitution.

110. *Essex Journal: or, the New-Hampshire Packet* (Newbury-Port, Mass.), 18 August 1775, 2.

News concerning George Whitefield and the religious controversy surrounding him captured the attention of colonial newspapers like news of no other individual in the colonial period, and the religious news of colonial newspapers increased in the Middle and Southern colonies in 1740 and in New England in 1745 in direct relation to Whitefield's visits to those colonies. Neither the Stamp Act crisis nor any other political controversy for that matter ever completely eradicated religious news from newspapers, and newspapers from 1730 on provided a forum for arguments for and against religious liberty.

But does news of religious controversy and individuals such as George Whitefield support the concept that religion was so pervasive in colonial America that it was the foundation of everything, including all the news? The answer is no, but the negative response must be qualified. Issues of religious liberty, God's providence, and countless insertions of hymns, religious poems, sermons, and scripture were not the only ways in which religion entered the news of colonial newspapers. Every type of news reported in papers contained some religious elements. Ship captains, for example, gave God credit for rescuing them from a tumultuous ocean,[111] and providence ensured death at sea as well.[112] Crime in early colonial America equaled sin,[113] and it was God's providence that provided an inoculation for smallpox and other diseases.[114]

Considering eighteenth-century religion's role in so much of news, it is safe to say that God permeated the thoughts and discussions of almost all subjects of news in colonial newspapers, but religious implications were not present in all news stories. This omission of religion explains the qualified no for religion's role in all news. It would also probably be safe to say that religion affected a reader's understanding of almost every piece of news, even if there were no overt religious references in it.

Religion, according to newspapers, was a vital part of colonial life. Most Americans viewed a relationship with God as important to their well-being, and newspaper stories intimated that God's providence would be there to protect a person if one was in a proper relation with God. The phenomenon of George Whitefield also supports the value and importance of religion. News about Whitefield was like news of no other person or event prior to 1740. Whitefield attained "status," something he never relinquished in America for thirty years, and news of him demonstrates how one individual or event could capture the media's attention.

One could say, as Deborah Franklin did, that news about Whitefield was found in all the papers, but that would also be true of religion in general.

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111. *Boston Evening-Post,* 13 October 1755, 2.

112. Ibid., 23 June 1760, 2.

113. Samuel Walker, *Popular Justice: A History of American Criminal Justice* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 13. Newspapers often discussed the past sins of criminals, *Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis), 17 May 1745, 4, and based executions on biblical injunctions, *Connecticut Journal, and New-Haven Post-Boy,* 6 July 1770, 3.

114. *American Weekly Mercury* Philadelphia), 19 August 1725, 2; and *New-England Weekly Journal* (Boston), 1 January 1740, 3.

Religion was vital to the lives of most colonial citizens, and newspapers provided reports of religious controversy and presented news tinted by religious belief throughout the colonial period.

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Agnes Smedley: A Radical Journalist in Search of a Cause

By Karla K. Gower

The journalism of Agnes Smedley from 1930 to 1936 is examined in light of Smedley's development as a radical American writer. Her radicalism emerges in three major intersecting themes: class, gender, and race. Smedley's early work in China reflects her ability to use her journalism to communicate the horror and the evils of what she saw around her.

The four decades from 1910 to 1950 were a time of great social and political unrest throughout the world. The period, marked by two world wars, saw the merits of capitalism debated by proponents of liberalism, socialism, anarchy and syndicalism, fascism, and communism.

Agnes Smedley, who came of age during the early part of that period, spent most of those four decades trying to make sense of the social and political turmoil around her. She rebelled against the strictures American society placed upon those who were poor and, especially, those who were female. She wrote, "It seemed that men could go anywhere, do anything, discover new worlds, but that women could only trail behind or sit at home having babies. Such a fate I rejected." Smedley became instead a radical journalist who attempted to do what she could "to struggle for fundamental social change and for liberation from every form of bondage."[1]

Smedley's passion for liberating the oppressed led her to assist, in the 1920s, such diverse groups as Indian nationalists striving to end the British Raj, and birth control advocates seeking the freedom to disseminate information on

1. Agnes Smedley, *Battle Hymn of China* (New York: Knopf, 1943), 7. Agnes Smedley, introduction to *Portraits of Chinese Women in Revolution*, eds. Jan and Steve MacKinnon (New York: Feminist Press, 1976), xxxii.

the topic to American women. Her travels took her to Germany in the 1920s and China in the 1930s. But it was in China that she found the cause to which she devoted the rest of her life. Nothing, not even her own impoverished childhood, had prepared her for the poverty of the Chinese peasant. Her goal in writing on the conditions that she found in China was to cover revolution, not in the abstract, but as it affected the everyday person.

During her life, Smedley wrote six books, including an autobiographical novel, and a series of articles for such American magazines as the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, and the *Call*. She was also a war correspondent for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in Germany, and a special correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian* during the 1930s. In America, Smedley was always outside of the mainstream press. Leftist reportage did not meld with the editorial perspectives of most newspapers and news magazines, and Smedley refused to whitewash her beliefs or opinions for anyone.

Smedley was seen by many, both inside and outside American journalism, as an apologist for the Chinese Communists. While she made no secret of the fact that she supported the Communists in China, she was not their puppet, and remained her own woman to the end. In response to accusations that she was biased, Smedley wrote: "Of course I am not impartial, [I] make no such pretense. Yet I do not lie, do not distort, do not misrepresent. I merely tell what I see with my own eyes and experience day by day."[2]

This article addresses the question of how Smedley's early work in China from 1930 to 1936 reflects her development as a radical journalist. Specifically, her magazine articles and two books, *Chinese Destinies* and *China's Red Army Marches*, will be examined.[3] Her radicalism emerges in three major intersecting themes: class, gender, and race.

Throughout the article, Wade-Giles romanization of Chinese personal and place names is used because it is the form with which Smedley herself was familiar and in which she wrote.[4]

Background

Agnes Smedley was born in Osgood, Missouri, on 23 February 1892, the second of five children. Her mother's family were hardworking, gentle, and

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2. Joyce Milton, *A Friend to China* (New York: Hastings House, 1980), 120.
3. Smedley wrote a total of thirty-two magazine articles during this time period. All of the articles were reviewed for this research, but not all of the articles are cited herein. There is no collection of her writings, although Janice MacKinnon and Stephen MacKinnon have included a list of her known works in their biography of her, titled *Agnes Smedley: The Life and Times of an American Radical* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
4. Since the early 1980s, the "Pinyin." system of rendering Chinese names and places into the Roman alphabet has become predominant, replacing the older Wade-Giles system. Under Pinyin, Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai, for example, have become Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai.

devout people. The Smedleys, in comparison, were rebels, wanderers, and tellers of tall tales. According to Smedley, "the two family strains, meeting in me, made my spirit a battlefield across which a civil war raged endlessly." Her earliest memories are of her father's "deep, beautiful voice" juxtaposed against the sight of her mother walking barefoot down the road carrying two pails of water.[5]

Her father, Charles, was a dreamer. Often he would disappear, for months at a time, with no explanation.[6] When Smedley's father was away, her mother did everything she could to keep the children fed. Smedley recalled her childhood years as colorless. She wrote, "There was but one thing on which I could depend — poverty and uncertainty." She attended school sporadically, depending on whether there was a school nearby, and worked from the age of fourteen to help provide for the family.[7]

When Smedley was eighteen, her mother died and Smedley was suddenly faced with the prospect of raising her three younger siblings, as well as the newborn child of her older sister, who had died giving birth. "Had I been more like my mother and less like my father, I would have accepted this burden as inevitable. But I resented my mother's suffering and refused to follow in her footsteps," she wrote. She left her family to pursue an education in Arizona at the Tempe Normal School, which she attended for two years.[8]

A short time later Smedley married and moved to California where she became a typing teacher at the San Diego Normal School. Although her marriage subsequently ended in divorce, San Diego gave Smedley the opportunity to develop her budding political awareness. From California, Smedley moved to New York and became involved with the Indian Nationalist Movement. In 1918, she was arrested under the Espionage Act for her work with the movement and thrown into the Tombs jail in New York City for six months. On her release, she wrote for the *Call*, a New York Socialist daily, and Margaret Sanger's *Birth Control Review*.

By 1920, Smedley decided to go to Germany to be at the center of the Indian Nationalist Movement. She lived in Berlin for the next nine years, freelancing for such American magazines as the *Nation* and the *New Republic*. But with the rise of Nazism in the late 1920s, the political conditions in Germany deteriorated, and Smedley decided to leave. She took a position as a

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5. Agnes Smedley, *Daughter of Earth* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1929; reprint, New York: Feminist Press, 1973), 9–10 (page references are to reprint edition). Agnes Smedley, *Battle Hymn of China* (New York: Knopf, 1943), 4. MacKinnon and MacKinnon, 4.

6. Smedley, *Daughter of Earth*, 35, 66, and 83.

7. Ibid., 46, 69, and 88.

8. Smedley, *Battle Hymn*, 7, 141, and 8. Smedley, *Daughter of Earth*, 28, 49–50, 123–131, and 141. MacKinnon and MacKinnon, 13.

foreign correspondent with the *Frankfurter Zeitung* to pay her way to India via China.[9]

In Search of a Cause

Smedley entered China from the Soviet Union at Manchuria in 1929. When she got off the train, she felt as though she had stepped into the Middle Ages. Nothing had prepared her for the utter poverty and despair in which the Chinese peasants lived. "Here was humanity abandoned," she wrote. "These men had grown to manhood like animals, without the slightest sense of responsibility toward each other or of human fellowship." Although she had written and fought for the freedom of oppressed people of India for ten years, the poverty had not been directly in front of her. She learned of the conditions in India only through the Indian intellectuals and revolutionaries with whom she worked. But in China, she came face to face with oppression and poverty. She saw the "rugged individualism" and the "survival of the fittest in its most primal form" as symptomatic of the then social system of China, and at the same time, she identified with the conditions and wrote, "Seeing it, I was forever saying to myself: 'There but for the grace of God, go I.' "[10]

The nature of her journalism placed heavy demands on her, "for I try to do work that is more than mere superficial journalism. I try to study and write scientifically. This is hard work, especially when I don't know a country." During her time in China, Smedley developed a style of documentary journalism called reportage, although the term was not actually introduced into American journalism until 1935. Coming to the United States from Europe, reportage was three-dimensional reporting that helped the reader experience the event recorded. Basically, the writers of reportage would describe an individual who was representative of a group and then draw larger conclusions from the particular facts of the individual. According to historians Charlotte Nekola and Paula Rabinowitz, reportage was the ideal form of writing for revolutionary and proletarian writers because it used the individual in the service of the masses. It raised political consciousness by linking one person with larger political movements, thereby replacing personal despair and frustration with mass action.[11]

But documentary reportage did more than just connect the individual with the masses. It also made vivid the unimagined existence of a group of people by picturing in detail the activities of one or more of them. It made such people visible and gave them a voice. This aspect of reportage was especially

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9. The information concerning Smedley's life comes from Smedley, *Battle Hymn,* Smedley, *Daughter of Earth,* and MacKinnon and MacKinnon.

10. Agnes Smedley, *Battle Hymn of China* (New York: Knopf, 1943), 32.

11. Charlotte Nekola and Paula Rabinowitz, eds., *Writing Red: An Anthology of American Women Writers, 1930 - 1940* (New York: Feminist Press, 1987), 194. William Stott, *Documentary Expression in Thirties America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 54 and 172.

important for Smedley who was writing about the Chinese peasants, a group certainly unimagined to the average American, at least until Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth* was published in 1931. Smedley wanted not only to give these peasants a voice, but also to make Americans "see" them and their situation.[12] In the United States, the Depression created the need for a documentary approach because people did not "see" the Depression. The techniques of reportage satisfied a yearning in 1930s America for first-hand experience. There was an implicit trust in experience. For Smedley, the form allowed her to enlist emotions in her attempt to get Americans to "see" the Chinese peasants. In her earlier works, Smedley had used on occasion the techniques of reportage, but it was in China that she really developed them and used them to her advantage.[13]

At the beginning of the 1930s, China was in the midst of a civil war. The Kuomintang, the nationalist government led by Chiang Kai-shek, had come to power in 1926, after the death of Sun Yat-sen, China's revolutionary leader. Following Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary legacy, the Kuomintang included Communists in its ranks. But Chiang Kai-shek, viewing the Communists as a threat to his rule, ordered them executed. Thousands were killed in the White Terror of 1927, and the remainder went underground. Chiang was also trying to bring under his control various war lords who had gained power in some of the provinces after the last Chinese dynasty fell in 1911. Taking advantage of the turmoil, the Japanese were at the same time quietly making advances into Manchuria and the interior of China.[14]

Smedley spent three months in Manchuria, and she was shocked by how the wealthy, and even the students she met, took the poverty and oppression in China for granted. She wrote, "In this unawareness and indifference I saw how old and how deep was China's subjection." One of the first subjects that Smedley had wanted to explore was the position of women in China. She did in "Five Women of Mukden," published in the *New Republic*. Within the sketches of five women, Smedley explored the themes of political corruption, female subjection, cultural differences, and the generation gap. She used the story of each individual woman to communicate the situation of all women in northern China. "Five Women of Mukden" gains its power through its simplicity and subtlety.[15]

Smedley began by painting a picture of an isolated city, cut off from any influences from the rest of the world. Life on the outside of the "great Manchu walls of Mukden" seemed "thousands of miles away." When the gates of the walls were swung shut at midnight, "the world beyond [seemed] more distant still." Smedley used sounds, or the lack thereof, to emphasize the political fear under which the people of Mukden lived. At first it was a night in

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12. Stott, 56, 172, 173, 27, 37, 33, 14, and 179.
13. Ibid., 72.
14. MacKinnon and MacKinnon, *Agnes Smedley*, 137.
15. Smedley, *Battle Hymn of China*, 39; "Five Women of Mukden," *New Republic*, 11 June 1930, 99. Mukden was a city in the province of Manchuria in the northern part of China.

which "the cold [seemed] to have frozen up all sound." But then the "only sound in the garden [was] the rustling of the dried leaves of the tall kaoliang stalks piled high against the gray stone walls." Inside the house, the Chinese woman talked about how her husband had been arrested as a Communist, based on the confession of a tortured friend. The woman had borrowed money to bribe the officials and now needed money to "induce" a lawyer to demand a trial for the husband. Since the law apparently provided for a "public trial," Smedley, as the participant observer, asked if she could attend. The people in the house were outraged. The trials were always secret. If a foreign woman attended, the authorities would wonder how she had come to know of the trial, and they would all be arrested. Then the woman "goes away." "When she is gone, there is again no sound except the rustling of the dry kaoliang leaves in our garden." It was almost as if the woman had not existed. The suddenness of the woman's departure and the odd language used by Smedley to describe her departure emphasized the secretive and furtive nature of their discussion.

The next woman profiled by Smedley in the article was Smedley's hostess in Mukden. The woman was very old-fashioned by Western standards. She rose when her husband entered the room and gave him her seat. She could not read, but asked intelligent questions of Smedley. She came to Mukden at the age of fifteen to marry a man she had never met. Since then, she had given birth to twelve children, of whom six had died. In this woman, now "old, worn out, and ugly," Smedley must have seen the American women of her childhood. Like those women, this Chinese woman had given of herself and had received nothing in return. Now the husband wanted to bring home a girl of sixteen as his second wife. The woman made no objection, but the eldest son, a modern student, stood up for his mother and forbade his father to bring another woman into the house.

Smedley was able to find out more about the situation of women in Mukden from a young woman teacher who had been educated in America. Together, they had tried to gain entrance to a woman's prison, but they were turned away after being told the director was ill. The teacher was told privately that they were denied permission because the prison was too dirty to be seen by a foreign journalist. The teacher did, however, tell Smedley that women in Mukden were still half-slave. A man could bring home a concubine, and his first wife could not object, and indeed was supposed to pretend to be a friend of the newcomer. Smedley did not comment on what she must have thought an intolerable situation for women, but she did get in her parting shot at the men. She asked the teacher what crimes the women prisoners had committed. The reply was that the majority were in for murdering their husbands.

Immediately thereafter in the article, Smedley told the story of a poor, foot-bound beggar woman who was not afraid of the men. The old woman had slipped and fallen on the ice. The street was full of men who had seen the accident but none came to assist her. They just stood and laughed:

> The peasant woman did not move a leg. But she braced herself with her hands and surveyed the crowd, back and forth and all

> around, as a general might survey a battlefield. Then she began. She cursed the assembled men, all their ancestors back to the thousandth generation, and all the brats they would bring into the world in the future. She cursed them individually and collectively, up and down and around and about. She cursed them systematically and thoroughly, working them over inch by inch.[16]

Smedley can almost be seen cheering from the sidelines. But it was not the ire of old women that would change China, and Smedley knew it. It would be the students. The last story of Chinese life in "Five Women of Mukden" was of a mother and daughter boarding a tram. The mother had bound feet, and hair tightly knotted at the back of her neck. Her daughter had short hair, natural feet and was tall and strong. "Many decades of culture lay between them." The tram was full of men and every seat was taken, so the daughter held onto her mother to support her. When a young male student gave up his seat for the old woman, the woman was overcome with gratitude, while the men laughed at the student's weakness. "The student and the tall girl both turned on them a look of withering scorn. Two of them — among fifty."

It is obvious in "Five Women in Mukden" that Smedley believed some modernization and Westernization was needed in China. That she did not intend for China to wholeheartedly embrace the ways of the West can be seen from her article "Hsu Mei-ling." Published in the *New Republic* two months before "Five Women in Mukden," this article focused on one woman, Hsu Mei-ling. As in "Five Women in Mukden," Smedley used the individual's situation to reflect and comment on the general. The article is a beautifully written and powerful description of life for a woman in China during a time of cultural and social upheaval. Hsu Mei-ling was "an old-fashioned girl" of the upperclass, with glossy, black hair, delicate, fair skin, and a lovely forehead. At the age of thirty and the mother of four children, Hsu Mei-ling was young and attractive. Everything about her description in the opening paragraph suggested "chaste beauty." Then, she walked, and the image was broken. "[She] is stiff and awkward, and if you look closely you can see the broad bands beneath her stockings. Her ankles are bound," she wrote.[17]

Mei-ling's husband, five years her junior, graduated from both an American mission school and college. "He [was] one of the worshippers of modernity, which he [confused] with Americanism." The husband had moved

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16. Ibid., 100. The ancient custom of binding the feet of women while still infants so that their feet remained like tiny "lilies" was stopped during a period of modernization at the beginning of the twentieth century. But those women who had had their feet bound as children were not able to unwrap their feet because of the pain that resulted. A woman with bound feet had difficulty walking and standing. Smedley considered the custom "simply a clever device to cripple women and keep them submissive." Smedley, *Battle Hymn*, 52.
17. "Hsu Mei-ling," *New Republic*, 9 April 1930, 219.

the family to a small, modern flat, furnished with "cheap upholstered furniture," all because "he [was] a modern man." Mei-ling, whose "whole being [breathed] the reserve, the dignity, and the composure of the old-fashioned girl," bowed to the will of her husband. Then, she learned her husband was having an affair with a Russian dancing girl. Mei-ling was devastated. She cut her hair and shortened her long Chinese gowns. Now "she appeared a miserable woman trying to compete with an empty-headed dancing girl for an empty-headed husband," as indeed she was. Mei-ling even asked Smedley to teach her to dance:

> But to dance, there must be joy in the heart and the feet must be elastic and light. And Mei-ling's heart was as heavy as lead and her feet had been crippled while she was still a child. After taking a few lame steps, she stopped suddenly in the middle of the floor and wept like a little girl, holding the sleeve of her gown before her face. Two of the children stood in the doorway watching their mother. Their eyes were big with wonder. Behind us the phonograph yelped out:
> 'Twas in November and my heart was full of vodka
> Yup! Alay Yup!
> That's when I'm thinking of you, Sonya!

The plight of a woman trying to hang on to a younger husband is not racially specific. Smedley's American readers would have been able to relate to Mei-ling, even though the cultural problems she faced would have been foreign to them. Through the use of the individual, Smedley was able to convey to American readers difficulties faced by Chinese women in general. But, on another level, the article depicted the tensions existing in China at the time between those who believed China should become Westernized, and those who thought it should reject modernity. Mei-ling was an example of what could happen to the grace, beauty, and charm of Chinese culture if the ways of the West were embraced fully, while the husband represented the negative qualities of the West to be avoided, such as crass materialism. Clearly Smedley did not want China to take on the capitalistic nature of America and all that that would entail, but at the same time, she did want China to unbind women, literally and figuratively.

From Manchuria, Smedley traveled south to the city of Peking and then on to the city of Nanking, then the Chinese capital. In Nanking, Smedley interviewed high officials of the Kuomintang party and "tried to be scrupulously fair in [her] articles." She still believed on this, her first visit to Nanking, that the Kuomintang represented at least China's national interests.[18] But through her reading and discussions with friends, Smedley grew to admire and respect the

18. Smedley, *Battle Hymn*, 60-61.

Chinese Communists who, for her, embodied the convictions and courage that had characterized the men of the French, American, and Russian revolutions.[19]

In May 1929, Smedley headed for the city of Shanghai. At the time, Shanghai was the political and cultural center of China. Every artist and intellectual of importance was living there, as were the political leaders of both the Kuomintang and the Communist Party. Through friends, Smedley was introduced to the reporters of the *China Weekly Review* and its editor, J. B. Powell. Powell was a supporter of the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek, but was anti-British and anti-Japanese enough to find common ground with Smedley. At this time, she also met Edgar Snow, who was just starting out as a reporter in China. Most of the American reporters who were in Shanghai came to China almost by accident, "as wire-service people, freelancers, or student travelers," and ended up staying. A. T. Steele described life in Shanghai for a reporter:

> From my arrival [in December 1931] until the outbreak of World War II, Shanghai was the news capital of China. That is where the international news agencies had their offices and where the correspondents of leading foreign newspapers were based. Virtually all news out of China was funneled through Shanghai. The only other news centers of consequence were Peking, Nanking, and (later) Chungking. With its cosmopolitan population and its sinful reputation, Shanghai was an interesting place to be stationed. Life was comfortable, news plentiful, and communications good. The town had no fewer than four English-language daily newspapers, along with an array of Chinese publications to be watched closely for hot tips from backcountry correspondents.[20]

Many, including Edgar Snow, were graduates of the University of Missouri's School of Journalism. Smedley, too, was originally from Missouri, although not from the University. There her similarity with these reporters ended. She had come to China to witness a revolution, and while the others knew little of China's situation, Smedley was already politicized. Historian John Fairbank described the group of Shanghai Americans as "all superficial — academics, government officials, journalists. We were a small thin substratum. . . . We never talked to a peasant." Smedley, on the other hand, would come to spend most of her time away from Shanghai, living with the peasants.[21]

During the fall of 1929, Smedley was invited by a Chinese friend to accompany him for two weeks of survey work in a wealthy lake region west of

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19. Ibid., 74.
20. Stephen MacKinnon and Oris Friesen, ed., *China Reporting: An Oral History of American Journalism in the 1930s and 1940s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 31-32.
21. Ibid., 75, MacKinnon and MacKinnon, *Agnes Smedley*, 141. MacKinnon and Friesen, 3 and 6.

Shanghai. Landlordism was a powerful institution in this area, and she saw for the first time the "fatalistic acceptance of great poverty existing next to great wealth." In an article in the *New Republic*, she described her personal experience at the home of the Chu family, the most powerful landowners in the area. Again, she likened China to Europe in the Middle Ages. The landlords lived in walled houses protected by soldiers, while the peasants "in surrounding villages [existed] in a poverty equal to anything the Middle Ages ever produced." The landlords were always accompanied by armed bodyguards lest a "Communist" peasant should attack them. Once inside the Chu home, Smedley described her surroundings in sufficient detail to give her readers a sense of the opulence of the place. She and the others in her party were immediately served tea and then supper. A rattling of chains and shuffling of feet off in a corner of the great hall in which they were dining aroused only Smedley's curiousity. She learned later that two peasant men had been arrested and imprisoned in the home. Smedley and the other guests were shown the "two, ragged miserable peasants, chained hand and foot." One of her party drew her aside. "'You are living through history,' the friend with me said." Smedley answered, "'It is easier to read it.'" The next morning, after a sleepless night, Smedley visited the villages in the area, accompanied by soldiers and members of the Chu family. On the trip, she "saw nothing but indescribable poverty, dirt, and disease." The homes of the peasants were merely holes surrounded by walls with earth floors. "The beds were boards supported by old pots and covered by filthy strips of rags." One family farmed one quarter of an acre of land, for which they had to pay rent to the landowner equal to more than half of their annual income.[22]

In the summer of 1930, Smedley went south from Shanghai to the city of Canton. Since few foreigners stayed in Canton during the heat of the summer, she had the government officials at her disposal. Smedley claimed that she relied on professors, newspapers, and herself for the "truth." In a letter from Canton, in which she said it was "ten at night and hot as hell," she described her work:

> I visit villages and talk with peasants to study the land question, which is the first and last question in China. Then I visit factories and workshops; talk with officials, all of whom are murderously reactionary with the butchery of tens of thousands of peasants, workers, and students to their credit. Then I try to read all the new literature on China; meet Chinese in a social way now and then; try to read and study economic literature that I may understand social forces better; and write, write, write. In the heat.[23]

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22. "Peasants and Lords in China," *New Republic*, 3 September 1930, 69. MacKinnon and MacKinnon, *Agnes Smedley*, 144.

23. Agnes Smedley, Canton, to Karin Michaelis, Denmark, 23 July 1930, Agnes Smedley Collection, Hayden Library, Arizona State University, Tempe. In June 1930 Smedley was romantically involved with Richard Sorge, whom she believed to be a

While in Canton, Smedley was given the opportunity to travel into the province of Kwangtung, the heart of the silk district. At the time, there were approximately three million peasants living in Kwangtung. Because of the economic decline in China and the fall in raw silk prices on the world market, the peasants were living in a state of poverty. Millions of men had emigrated from the region into the South Seas in search of work. Their monthly remittances meant their families' survival. Smedley was able to interview several peasants and visit their homes, which were "bare of any shred of comfort, often furnished only with a wooden bench, a bed, a few pewter cooking utensils, and cocoon frames." Most of the peasants were barefoot, their feet hardened. They answered all questions about the economy and their social relationships with frankness, "unless the Peasant Leagues [were] mentioned. Then they [studied] their hoof-like feet and [left] you to your own thoughts."[24]

Despite the poverty, capitalism was finding its way into the Kwangtung region. These peasants had always had to pay rent to landlords for the use of the land, but now "modern Chinese capitalists of Canton and Hongkong," were buying up the ancestral lands and subletting them. The peasants bore the weight of each successive tenancy. Money-lenders were springing up to provide money to the peasants on credit. Of the situation, Smedley wrote:

> Should I make general statements or draw conclusions, it can be said that everything in Kwangtung shows a change from the old system of aristocratic land-holdings and social system into an attempt to introduce the new capitalist system; the impossibility of the latter is manifest because the colonial position of China does not permit of the development of an independent industrial life but leaves its economic structure open to all the whims of predatory capitalism of its imperialist masters.[25]

German living in Shanghai and a correspondent for the German press. Later, she introduced Sorge to Ozaki Hotsumi. Unbeknownst to Smedley, Sorge was actually a Russian spy. From 1939 to 1941, he and Ozaki transmitted high-level communications between the German and Japanese governments to Moscow. Both men were executed in 1944 by the Japanese. Because Smedley was the one who introduced the men to each other, she was later connected to their spy ring by the American army. The army soon recanted the allegation but the damage to Smedley's reputation in postwar, anti-Communist America had been done. MacKinnon and MacKinnon, *Agnes Smedley*, 146.

24. "Among the Peasants of Kwangtung," *Modern Review*, September 1930, 683.

25. Ibid., 687.

She concluded that:

> developments in Kwangtung prove, in so far as my limited knowledge of the subject teaches me, that this section of China is proceeding along lines that go to prove absolutely the Marxian interpretation of social development. It is a most striking development, proceeding under a reactionary government that wages war on Marxism.[26]

As Smedley saw more and more of the poverty of China, her interest in the Red Army and the Chinese Communists grew. An account of a young student's experiences with the Red Army reinforced the positive image of the army Smedley was creating in her own mind. The student's account, although "quite superficial, [was] the first unbiased account of events taking place in cities or districts captured by the Communist armies in central China." Despite Smedley's pronouncement, the student was not entirely unbiased since he was sympathetic to the Communists, although not formally one himself, when he encountered the Red Army. The student had returned from university to his native city for the summer a few hours after the Red Army had captured the city. The student was treated with respect by the soldiers because he was sympathetic to their cause. As he walked through the streets, everyone he met seemed happy and excited. On walls and doors throughout the city were painted slogans in white which said: "Workers and peasants, unite! Protect the free trade of poor traders! Poor men never fight poor men! Protect the Soviet army of workers and peasants! Carry out the land revolution! Establish the Soviet of Hunan, Hupah, and Kiangsi!" Apparently, the Red Army carried with it a propaganda corps whose duty it was to cover within one hour a newly captured city with slogans. The aim of the Red Army, as told to Smedley by the student, was "to release the workers and peasants from the fierce oppression of the Kuomintang and the imperialists," a sentiment which Smedley could whole-heartedly embrace. In this particular city, the Red Army burned the headquarters of the magistrate and the tax office. When the owner of the jewelry shop refused to "contribute to the revolution," the peasants were invited by the Red Army to loot the store. The army also "fixed" the price of essential items, such as rice and kerosene, at other shops so the peasants could afford them. But, after a few days, the Red Army was forced to leave the city before the advancing Kuomintang troops, and the city reverted to its old ways.[27]

Smedley began focusing more and more on the Communists and their heroism in her writing. In "Shan-Fei, Communist," Smedley presented the case study of the daughter of a rich landowner who became a communist and married a peasant leader. The woman was brave and strong, and although she suffered for

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26. Ibid., 688.
27. "A Chinese Red Army," *New Masses*, January 1931, 8.

her beliefs, she was prepared to die for them. Using the earth imagery that runs through most of her work, Smedley wrote:

> There are those who will ask: Is Shan-fei young and beautiful? Shan-fei is twenty-five years of age. Her skin is dark and her face broad; her cheekbones are high. Her eyes are as black as midnight, but they glisten and seem to see through a darkness that is darker than the midnight in China. She is squarely built like a peasant and it seems that it would be very difficult to push her off the earth—so elemental is she, so firmly rooted to the earth. Beautiful? I do not know—is the earth beautiful?[28]

In the middle of 1932, Smedley published her first book on China, *Chinese Destinies*, a social documentary on life in China. Many of the stories had been previously published in magazines, but all use reportage techniques that draw the reader into making an emotional commitment. In the first such story, "A Chinese Son Rebels," the participant observer overheard a conversation in a restaurant, in which a man lamented to his friends that he was unable to get his son to marry. The others proffered words of advice but concluded in dismay that the youth of China were turning towards communism. In another article, Smedley strung together a series of short vignettes to suggest "A Moving Picture of Shanghai." The reader moves from a happy child, to a respectable dinner, to an old man dancing in a night cafe with a young dancing girl. Juxtaposed against the latter is the shrill sound of the factory siren at five o'clock in the morning as the little children, tired women, and men go to or return from "a night's heavy labor." Other women work as prostitutes, "under the protection of foreign flags and in the full glare of the lights of the city at night," while coolies are beaten in the streets by policemen. The lights and gaiety of the wealthy side of Shanghai are continually contrasted with the city's poor and seamier sides. A foreign woman was overheard saying she wanted to leave China because she could endure it no more, and Smedley concluded:

> But there is no leaving China for the masses of the oppressed. They must stand and be beaten or shot to death as serfs, or they die fighting for their freedom. The foreigners can run away; or those who do not, remain and join the ranks of those who do the beating — only one in a hundred thousand joins the ranks of the oppressed.[29]

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28. "Shan-fei, Communist," *New Masses*, May 1931, 3.
29. Agnes Smedley, "A Moving Picture of Shanghai," *Chinese Destinies: Sketches of Present Day China* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1933), 25.

Smedley, who was often ambivalent toward women, perhaps because she did not understand those who would not stand up for themselves and fight, found a new respect for them in the Chinese revolutionary women. Using an individual woman, Chang Siao-hung, to reveal the role Communist women in general were playing in China's revolution, Smedley prefaced the case study by writing: "It is best that the woman speak quickly, lest tragedy overstrike her and silence her tongue forever." The suggestion is that there was a great danger in being revolutionary and hence a need for urgency. It also makes clear Smedley's intention to give these people a voice. As the woman proceeded to tell her story, she reminded the reader that what she was saying was true. She wrote: "Do you think I speak of the dark ages, of the past, or even of a quarter of a century ago when I was a child — of customs dead and gone? No, I speak of the present." The woman described the massacres of students and peasants by the Kuomintang with brutal detail, and then concluded, "Of course I am a Communist. What else can any person be who desires that the vast masses of toiling human beings shall become free men, developing for themselves a culture such as has been denied them through all ages?" Smedley left the reader with no choice. The reader must agree with the woman or be aligned with those who commit atrocities against innocent people.[30]

In "Living Dead," Smedley described what happened to three women who did not put the revolution first. One was a young Communist who fought alongside her husband. He escaped capture, but she was thrown into prison. Her father bought her way out on the condition that she denounce communism in a letter published in the newspaper. She did so to save her life, but her husband in turn denounced her for being a traitor to the revolution. She spent the rest of her days at her father's home, an opium addict. The second woman went insane when her Communist husband was killed, and the third gave up the revolution for material gain. She spent her time turning in her former friends. All three women were examples of the living dead, according to Smedley.[31]

Other Chinese women, although not Communists, still earned Smedley's respect. The women who worked in the silk factories in Kwangtung Province were considered by many to be lesbians because they would not marry. The mills and filatures had fundamentally changed the position of women in the area. The money these women made gave them "a weapon of great power in their poor families, and though many lost in the struggle, tens of thousands won." In fact, the birth of a daughter was greeted with pride and joy in the area.[32]

Some of the stories in *Chinese Destinies* are humorous and light-hearted. They appear to have been written early in her stay in China because they deal with first impressions, although no dates are provided to indicate when they were written. In "The Foreigner in China," Smedley gave an account of her

30. "The Dedicated," *Chinese Destinies*, 68.
31. "The Living Dead," *Chinese Destinies*, 97.
32. "Contrasts," *Chinese Destinies*, 116.

first encounters with the foreigners living in China. None, it seemed, knew anything about the Chinese. Even "three liberal newspaper men" could not introduce Smedley to any Chinese people. They gathered their news from the Chinese and foreign press, Chinese officials, and foreign secret services.[33]

In "Mosquitoes Turned Guerrilla Warriors," Smedley opened with a joke: "'When is a mosquito not a mosquito?' asked the cynical old frog. The tadpole gave up, for he was young and didn't know much about Shanghai. 'When it is a newspaper,' laughed the frog—and the tadpole looked discouraged." Mosquitoes, it appears, were little illegal dailies that sprang up in Shanghai after the Kuomintang decided it "knew the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help it God," and imposed censorship on the Chinese press. These dailies existed for a few days, weeks, months, depending on what they published and how quick they were in dodging the police. Often, the police would swoop in to suppress a daily and find nothing except "perhaps an old chair." Lengthy articles would then appear in the Chinese press about the large quantities of Communist literature seized. It did not take long for the British to associate Smedley with a mosquito. She wrote:

> Once after they raided a room with a chair in it — so it was told to me — the rumor went around Shanghai that documents seized proved that the Communists were plotting to establish a new government and that I, writer of these seditious lines, had been sent out as the propaganda agent for the new regime. The membership of this new regime seemed to consist of the personal enemies of the Shanghai police force or the various secret services. One was regarded as a suspicious character because he studied the labor problems; of course, all decent Chinese in general were suspected. We were all disappointed at the jobs assigned us. I, at least, had wanted to be King.[34]

Like the insect, the little dailies kept popping up no matter what the authorities did. "So they [were] struck at, time and again; and again and again they [dodged] and [bobbed] up some place else like a cork on a river." According to Smedley, even the government officials read the mosquitoes because they were the only newspapers that carried any "real" news. But not all of the mosquitoes were dedicated to communism or to the revolution. Many were little more than gossip columns, of little concern to the authorities.

Smedley's second book on China was *China's Red Army Marches*, the first work in English on the history of the Communist party in China from 1927 to 1931. In her introduction, Smedley indicated that the book consisted of stories "based on actual events in which leading personalities of China have taken part." She had hidden a wounded Red Army commander in her home in

33. "The Foreigner in China," *Chinese Destinies*, 109.
34. "Mosquitoes Turned Guerrilla Warriors," *Chinese Destinies*, 138.

Shanghai while he recuperated, and she learned of the events about which she wrote from him and others. Since she was not present for any of the events described in the book, the work is a series of case studies with no first-hand observations. Perhaps because she was not present for any of these events, the work lacks credibility and power.[35]

Smedley's biases toward the Red Army are clear from the outset. In her introduction, she stressed the democratic nature of the Red Army, which proposed an alliance with the Kuomintang to fight the Japanese. The Red Army was prepared to present a united front on three conditions: first, that the wars in the Chinese Soviet regions ceased; second, that the Chinese people be granted the democratic rights of free speech, press, assembly, and organization; and third, that the people be allowed to organize armed detachments of anti-Japanese volunteers. Certainly, an American reader would find such conditions not only reasonable but self-evident. But they were necessary in China because Chiang Kai-shek, "dictator of the Nanking Government and beloved 'strong man' supported by the foreign capitalist powers," threatened with death anyone who advocated fighting the Japanese instead of the Red Army. It is clear from the tone she set in the introduction and how she immediately almost wrapped the Red Army in an American flag, that her intention with the book was to create a favorable image of the Red Army. She referred repeatedly in the introduction to the foreign press who had labeled the Red Army as Red Bandits and who had blamed executions performed by the Kuomintang on the Red Army. She was not trying to be objective, she wrote, but just present the other side.

For Smedley, that other side was openly propagandistic. She painted her peasants as heroic and the Kuomintang soldiers as lazy, stupid, and cowardly. The Kuomintang men did not bayonet any babies, but they did rape and kill a pregnant woman. The Red Army, on the other hand, executed only soldiers, a few rich landlords and monks, and did so after a mass meeting in which everyone voted. The Red Army was well organized, controlled, polite. The soldiers took only what they needed, and then only from the landlords.

Smedley's peasants welcomed and embraced the Red Army wherever it went. That the contrary actually occurred is suggested by Harold R. Isaacs in his *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution.* Isaacs was a reporter in China and a friend of Smedley. His work focused on the political machinations of both Chiang Kai-shek and the Russian Communist party. He claimed that the peasants were apathetic and hostile to the Red Army and that the committees set up by the Chinese Communists fell apart as soon as the Army moved out. Smedley did not suggest in her work that viable Communist soviets were left in the wake of the Red Army, but, according to her, that was because the Red Army did not have the time to properly train the peasants in political ideology nor was it able to spare men to leave behind who could have maintained control.[36]

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35. Agnes Smedley, *China's Red Army Marches* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1934).
36. Harold Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, 2d rev. ed. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1961).

The Red Army, in *China's Red Army Marches*, was Communist in ideology, but, more importantly for Smedley, it was revolutionary. The cause of the Red Army was the liberation of the Chinese peasants, and that crusade was very attractive to Smedley. It was different from the stand of the Communist parties of Russia and of America. The movement was rural and peasant-based, not urban and proletarian. The repeated image in the book of peasants working all season to harvest their rice, and then having to give it all to the landlords for rent is an image that would anger the average American who believed in getting ahead through hard work.

Smedley's *China's Red Army Marches* is different in its viewpoint from not only Isaacs' work, but also other books done on the Chinese Communists around this time. Anna Louise Strong, who wrote *China's Millions*, never actually talked to a peasant.[37] She interviewed intellectuals, foreigners, and leaders for their views on the revolution. Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China* examined the politics of the Red Army and the personalities of its leaders in an effort to understand the rise of the Communist party. Smedley, on the other hand, presented the revolution and the Red Army through the eyes of the peasants, not through its leaders. That viewpoint gave the revolution a social rather than a political bent. Smedley was most interested in how the revolution was affecting the ordinary Chinese.

Women are frequently shown in the book. They fight beside the men and are as brave. But, again Smedley's ambivalence toward women comes out. There were other women, especially those with young children, who complained to the men that their children were dying from hunger. The implication was that the men were doing their best to create a better world for the future children of China. They had bigger things to worry about than a crying child. At another point in the work, Smedley said there were heavy losses in women fighters in one battle because women were hard to control in battle. For Smedley, women were perfectly capable of being equal to men, but there were many variations among women. She did not idealize women as she did the peasants.

The problem with *China's Red Army Marches* is that the people portrayed are not as fully developed as the individuals in her magazine articles; however, that may not be Smedley's fault. Edgar Snow, in interviewing Red Army soldiers, found that they became lost in the collectivity of the Red Army. When asked about themselves, they told only stories about the Army. The stories they told were important to them, Snow believed, not because they were there as individuals, but because the Red Army had been there and behind it the ideology for which they were fighting. Snow said the same happened when he interviewed Mao Tse-tung;

> It was no longer "I" but "we"; no longer Mao Tse-tung, but the Red Army; no longer a subjective impression of the

37. Anna Louise Strong, *China's Millions: The Revolutionary Struggles from 1927 to 1935* (New York: Knight Publishing, 1935).

> experiences of a single life, but an objective record by a bystander concerned with the mutations of collective human destiny as the material of history.[38]

There is a sense in *China's Red Army Marches* that Smedley is trying to cover a lot of bases. In her introduction, she compared China to the Russia of 1917 to 1922. Since she wrote the book in Moscow, she must have anticipated its readership as a Russian audience that would be supportive of Communism and the Red Army. Similarly, the American Communist Party would presumably be interested in the work. But, it is also clear that she wanted to reach mainstream America. Communism is downplayed in the book. This is the story of the Red Army, not the Communist party. In fact, it is difficult to discern from the book whether the Red Army was even Communist. There was a Communist party contingent that traveled with the army and spent time proselytizing the villagers, but its members were definitely distinct from the Red Army, which was democratic, just, and fair.

The review of *China's Red Army Marches* in the *New York Times Book Review*, pointed out the negative qualities of the Red Army, and Smedley's obvious sympathy for them. The reviewer concluded that the work threw much light on China's situation, although "in the final analysis one does not feel convinced that such an effort of the masses 'to build a new life on the ashes of the old' may lead to the establishing of a 'system in which we can advance to a progressive, free, and cultured life.' " Smedley's prediction that the Chinese Red Army would defeat the Kuomintang was dismissed with the observation that "anything may happen in China."[39]

For the most part, Americans were uneducated about the Communist Chinese and state of the revolution in China. American reporters in Shanghai said they could not report anything good about the Communists or bad about the Kuomintang without being labelled Communist themselves. Even if they did send in positive information about the Chinese Communists, the editors would not use it and would create their own version. According to Strong, the world was shocked when it learned at the end of 1932 in the Lytton Report to the United Nations that the Chinese Communists had become the actual rival of the Kuomintang. Strong wrote:

> Through all this period the news of Soviet China came to the world almost entirely through its foes. No foreigners were able to pass the military blockade of Nanking to enter the Red regions, and except for the collection of stories painstakingly compiled by Agnes Smedley from revolutionary fighters who

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38. Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* 1st rev. and enl. ed. (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1973), 129, 172.
39. A. M. Nikolaeff, "The Communist Armies of China," *New York Times Book Review*, 14 October 1934, 22.

> occasionally reached Shanghai (a compilation for which history will be grateful to her), we have only the word of occasional missionaries briefly caught in Red districts, and of official propagandists of the Kuomintang.[40]

After completing *China's Red Army Marches*, Smedley went back to the United States. It was the first time in fourteen years that she had set foot on American soil. "America was like a strange planet," she wrote, "and the friends of my youth, now middle-aged, seemed to be living and thinking much as they had lived and thought fifteen years before." She had hoped to obtain a position as a foreign correspondent for an American paper, but nothing materialized. After an emotionally draining reunion with her family in California, she set sail again for Shanghai in October, 1934, at the age of forty-two.[41]

Although many times during her years in Germany, Smedley toyed with the idea of returning to live in the United States, no such thoughts crossed her mind this time. China was where she wanted and needed to be. Her interest in and respect for the Red Army and the peasants of rural China strengthened her revolutionary zeal. She saw herself as providing a voice to those whom the rest of the world seemed to be ignoring. Then, she became not only their voice but their advocate.

Conclusion

Smedley rose from humble beginnings to become a journalist fighting to give the Chinese peasants a voice, forcing the world to "see" them as she saw them — heroic individuals struggling valiantly to overcome oppression. For the most part, Smedley has been forgotten in America as a journalist. Philip Jaffe, an American Communist, attributes that to the quality of her writings. He claims they are:

> simplistic and frequently factually incorrect. As history, they have little value. As propaganda, they are now outmoded, and as autobiography, they are over-written, over emotional, and often bathetic. Thus her writings have only a nostalgic value. Moreover they show no signs of any knowledge of political theory, Marxist or bourgeois.[42]

But Jaffe's analysis of her writings and the weight he assigns her contribution to journalism are simplistic. Smedley made no pretense of being objective. She told the "truth" as she saw it and was honest about it. Her style

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40. Strong, *China's Millions,* 440.
41. Smedley, *Battle Hymn*, 128. Two years later her father died. At first she was stricken with remorse, then she learned that in Oklahoma he had won sixteen bottles of beer in a poker game. He drank them all. "Then he up and died."
42. Philip J. Jaffe, "Agnes Smedley: A Reminiscence," *Survey* 20 (1974): 172-179.

of journalism is older and more passionate than objective journalism. She was a partisan storyteller, who became intimately involved with the people and the causes of which she wrote.

Compared with books on similar topics written by her contemporaries, such as Edgar Snow, Harold Isaacs, and Anna Louise Strong, her works do not appear to be factually incorrect. By the time Smedley got to China, she was not interested in political theory or ideologies. She wanted an economic democracy that worked. She did not particularly care what it was called. She believed, at the time, that the Communists were the best answer for China. Her death in 1950 spared her from having to confront the uglier side of Maoist China.

Her writings have value as history for they provide scholars with an understanding of the development of a radical American female journalist. They give insight into not just life in China for the peasants in the 1930s, but also life in the United States for a radical female journalist during the same period. Smedley's writings reflect an individual who identified completely with the poor, the ones who have no voice themselves. She gave them a voice, and in her writings, they come alive. Smedley raged against oppression in her work. She wanted people to see what they were doing to other human beings. She used her journalism to communicate the horror and the evils of what she saw around her. For Smedley, all people were created equal, and she was determined to tell the world that, whatever the personal cost. Smedley remained until the end very much an American and truly a daughter of the earth.

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Ishbel Ross, from Bonar Bridge to Manhattan: The Gaelic Beginning of an American Reporter

By Beverly G. Merrick

Ishbel Ross is best known for her sixty-year career as an American reporter, biographer, and novelist, with a byline recognized from coast to coast. This article traces the little-known growing up years of her life in the Scottish highlands.

Barbara Bannon was the last person to have made a professional contact with Ishbel Ross before her tragic death.

In September 1975 Bannon had interviewed Ishbel about her latest biography, *Power With Grace: The Life Story of Mrs. Woodrow Wilson.* The interview had been arranged by Arnold W. Ehrlich, then editor-in-chief of *Publisher's Weekly,* one of many in the publishing field who spoke of Ishbel in terms of legend — "She's that remarkable woman reporter from the *New York Herald Tribune* — even though her last working day on the paper had been during the Jazz Age of the 1920s.[1] Bannon wrote that she met Ishbel only this once,

> in her New York East Side apartment, large and rambling, filled with books and mementos, obviously accumulated over a long period of time. It was very hot and I was unavoidably detained in getting there. My immediate impression was that

1. Barbara A. Bannon, letter to author, 26 April 1988. The Jazz Age is a period roughly set between the end of World War I and the early 1930s.

she was very depressed and hadn't thought I was coming at all. However, she brightened up and we got on very well.[2]

Bannon later observed in a book review that Ishbel Ross's own life story, told from the viewpoint of a seventy-nine-year-old, is as interesting in its way as that of any of those she wrote about. Listening to her one could "instantly perceive the natural affinity of this Scottish lady for other women who have taken their lives in hand, sometimes against great odds."[3]

Before Bannon's interview appeared in print, Ishbel Ross was dead. The last book review now became a memorial tribute — with a final ironic twist: Ishbel is alleged to have died by her own hand. A footnote at the end of the interview reported that Ross had "died suddenly on 21 September."[4] Her death was reported by the night custodian at her New York cooperative. In the early morning hours, her body was found in the inner courtyard below the open window of her fourth-floor apartment. The ruling on her death cannot be located by city officials.

This article explores Ross's growing up years in Scotland, years spent in the highlands that provided her with a grounding in life and language that later made her one of America's best known journalists and novelists.

Ross had been reminiscing during the interview with Bannon. She told the interviewer about her home in the Highlands. She was born in "a picturesque old town where Highland chieftains still walk the streets in their tartans and where Gaelic is still spoken."[5] Later Ross would walk the streets where flappers wore the tartans and Yanks home from "The War to End All Wars" spoke the jive of the speakeasy.

During the Jazz Age, she was one of the top reporters in New York. Richard Kluger said as much in *The Paper,* the most recent book-length history of the *New York Herald Tribune.* He called the Scotswoman "the best all-around reporter" of the *Herald Tribune* on its ascent to greatness.[6] She was a prolific writer. In a career spanning nearly sixty years, she wrote thousands of newspaper stories and hundreds of magazine articles, five novels, and twenty biographies. Still another work, *Fifty Years on Fifth*, a history for the Fifth Avenue Association, was done under a pseudonym.[7]

Ross served on the staff of the *New York Tribune* and later the *New York Herald Tribune,* from 1919 to 1933; from 1928 on, she worked with famed

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2. Bannon, letter to author.
3. Bannon, "Ishbel Ross: The Career of a Biographer of Notable 19th Century Women Proves How Far Women Have Come in the 20th," *Publisher's Weekly,* 29 September 1975, 6-8.
4. Ibid.
5. Harvey R. Warfel, *Portrait: American Novelists of Today* (New York: American Book Co., 1951), 365.
6. Richard Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of the* New York Herald Tribune (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 220.
7. According to an internal undated memo initialed BR [Bruce Rae] in Ishbel Ross's obituary file at the *New York Times.*

city editor Stanley Walker. The venue of her coverage was as broad as the interests of the New York reader. She covered nearly every major story of the 1920s and early 1930s, including the Stillman divorce, the Hall-Mills murder trial, the death of Edison, and the Lindbergh kidnapping. She interviewed many world celebrities. Yet the small, sturdy Scotswoman of immense dignity[8] was able to pull together under deadline an obituary in perfect prose, dear to the heart of her caustic city editor.

The 1930s was a decade of transition for Ross. She became a novelist, writing about her wide travels and insights into the changing panorama of New York. She also wrote about woman journalists. Her inclusive biography on American women in journalism, *Ladies of the Press* (1936)[9], is widely quoted as the best source on the subject because it is the first ever written about the history of women reporters in the United States.

During World War II, Ross joined the war effort. This time she wrote magazine articles for the overseas division of the Office of War Information. These articles echoed the earlier stories about the repercussions of World War I she had written for the *Herald Tribune.*

Throughout the latter three decades of her life Ishbel launched a fourth career in writing. She became the leading biographer of the wives of presidents. Her publication credits also include biographies of the Taft family, Clara Barton, Elizabeth Blackwell, Varina Davis, Rose Greenhow O'Neal, and other women notables of the nineteenth century.

Retaining a Scottish Patina

Still, this explorer of American life never lost the patina of her own culture. Ishbel retained a lovely Scottish lilt to her voice right up to her death.[10]

Once, in casual reading, Ross was pleased to find evidence of her ancestral beginnings in an article by Kenneth MacLeish. It was called "The Highlands, Stronghold of Scottish Gaeldom," and appeared in the *National Geographic,* in March 1968. The article featured the picture of an ancient cemetery. Although Ross rarely shared details with anyone about her family's past, she once confided to a friend that her own grandparents and many members of her family were buried there. The cemetery is located in Kilmartin, Argyll-shire (Argyll County), Scotland.[11]

In the article, MacLeish talked about touring Argyll-shire. "The very names of villages here echo an earlier age — Kilbride, Kilninver, Kilmichael" — for *kil* refers to a monk's cell of medieval times. Then he stopped at Kilmartin: "Its graveyard, covered with turf as thick and soft as green fur, contained burial

8. Ibid.
9. Ross, *Ladies of the Press*: *The Story of Women in Journalism by an Insider, Ishbel Ross* (New York: Harper, 1936).
10. Bannon, "The Career of a Biographer."
11. Ishbel Ross, letter to H.B. Fant, 13 April 1968.

slabs of the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries. . . . Beyond, a flat-floored valley stretched away toward Ireland.[12]

As MacLeish stood studying the scene, the local pastor, who had come out of the manse to show him the treasures of his parish, said, "They call it the Valley of the Kings."

As a schoolgirl, Ross read avidly about that valley. Her grandparents were interred at the ancient burying ground of the Kingdom of Dalriada, forerunner of Scotland. She apparently treasured this issue of the *National Geographic.*[13]

As for the history of the Highlands, every schoolroom rings with the legend, telling how around 500 A.D. the Scots, called Irish Celts, came from Ireland to conquer a new territory. The Celts warred with the Picts, who were native people who may have come from the Continent as early as 1000 B.C. The Celts and Picts battled until 843 A.D., when Kenneth Alpin united both people and became King of Alba. In the thirteenth century, Alba was renamed Scotland.[14]

Talking About the Old Traditions

Ishbel's father often talked about the old traditions because David Ross was a "Gaelic scholar of great keenness and ability,"[15] both reading and writing the language, which was "a dying art even then in the Highlands."[16] The Gaelic tongue is a Celtic language related to Irish, Welsh, and Breton, a reflection of the earlier battles won and lost. Even so, the name of Ross hails from none of these cultures. Ross and many other Scottish names have Norse origins. The surname Ross would make it seem the Norse had sounded the final trumpet through their progeny because it is a very common in Scotland — with "rose" as a derivative.

David Ross was born in Strathcarron, Ross-shire[17] to Donald Ross and Ann Munroe on 28 January 1857. As a youth, David lived in Ullapool,[18] Ross-shire, in the west of the Grampian Mountains, a desolate mass of heather-mantled mountains scoured by the wind and rain of North Minch.

Mountain and sea were the archigenesis of David Ross. The sea surrounded and indented the Grampions in a firth — a long, narrow bay — at Ullapool. Scotland has hundreds of firths, and because of them it is impossible to travel anywhere in the Highlands more than forty miles from saltwater. There

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12. Kenneth MacLeish, "The Highlands, Stronghold of Scottish Gaeldom," *National Geographic,* March 1968, 418.
13. Ross, letter to Fant.
14. MacLeish, *National Geographic,* 414.
15. Obituary, David Ross, *Saint John (New Brunswick) Telegraph-Journal,*
16. Ross, "The Lifestory of Frank MacKenzie Ross," (unpublished manuscript for Tain Royal Academy, Tain, Scotland, 1969-70).
17. Obituary, David Ross, *Saint John (New Brunswick) Telegraph-Journal.*
18. Beatrice Reeves, niece of Ishbel Ross, Family Genealogy, letter to author, 10 June 1988.

is nowhere in the country one does not find sea gulls, and few places where one cannot smell the sea. Mountain and sea are part of any Highland background, and so it was for Ishbel's father.

David Ross belonged to the people north of the Great Glen, who were and still are far less open to outside influence than the rest of Scotland. As MacLeish pointed out, Ross-shire and the neighboring counties of Caithness, Cromarty, and Sutherland and half of Inverness, are in effect a northern island, a sea-scoured land cut off from the rest of Britain by the Great Glen, a long, natural cleft.[19] Towns are few and far between. Villages are separated by great tracts of uninhabitable moorland and mountain, with natives isolated in thousands of lonely glens.

Ross rarely spoke of her mother, Grace MacCrone, or her origins. Not much can be known from Ishbel's description of her mother as "a graceful beauty in her youth."[20] However, her mother's genealogy suggests that her side of the family came from a more isolated landscape than that of the Rosses, one where Gaelic was spoken as the natural language.

Gaelic was spoken in the home of Ross's maternal ancestors five generations back, Murdo MacKenzie of Stornoway, and his wife, the former Janet Farrier. Stornoway is the main port on the island of Lewis of the Outer Hebrides, northeast of Scotland. The main ferry from Stornoway, across the North Minch to Scotland, connects with Ullapool.[21] Ishbel's maternal side is a lineage of daughters. The MacKenzie's daughter Isabella married Simon MacKenzie, and their granddaughter Barbara married Alexander McCrone. Grace Archibald McGrone was born to Barbara and Alexander on 10 March 1866.[22]

David and Grace married on 7 December 1888, when Grace was twenty-two and David was thirty-one.[23] They made their home at Achnahaird Farm, on the west coast of Ross-shire. Ishbel once described Achnahaird in poetic terms: the hills, moors, and lochs created "a rugged background of storm and shadow, shot with unforgettable colours."[24]

Grace Ross's first son, Donald Alexander, was born 24 August 1889.[25] A second son, Frank MacKenzie, was born 14 April 1891. But in the case of her second child she went south to Glasgow, where the nearest maternity hospital to Archnahaird Farm was then located.[26]

Records show that by the time the Ross's third son and David's namesake was born, on 6 July 1893, the family had left Achnahaird for Bonar

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19. MacLeish, *National Geographic,* 411.
20. Ross, "The Lifestory of Frank MacKenzie Ross."
21. Reeves, letter to author, 10 June 1988.
22. Reeves, Family Genealogy.
23. Ibid.
24. Ross, "The Lifestory of Frank MacKenzie Ross."
25. Reeves, Family Genealogy.
26. Paul Wright, "Frank Ross Wanted to be a Farmer; They Made Him Lieutenant-Governor," *Western Business & Industry,* 29 (December 1955): 24.

Bridge, fifty miles by train north of Inverness, the capital of the Highlands of Scotland.[27]

Ishbel Ross has called Inverness one of the beautiful small towns of the world: "a real jewel, much like Lucerne."[28] Near Inverness, at Culloden, on 16 April 1746, the Highlanders lost their last battle against the English, after they had, at the call of their chiefs, risen to follow Prince Charles Edward, also called Bonnie Prince Charlie.[29]

It was in Bonar Bridge that Isabella Margaret, apparently named after her maternal great-grandmother, was born on 15 December 1895. Ishbel, a Gaelic version of Isabella,[30] is the name by which she would be known to all but family. On 26 April 1903, when Ishbel was eight, the last two of her five brothers were born. The twins were named Alistair Bishop and Hugh Bain.[31]

At the time of Ishbel's birth, David Ross was a public official.[32] The Parish Board, a kind of village commission for Bonar Bridge, consisted of three people; David Ross was one of them. The *Parochial Register for Scotland* lists Ross as a "poor inspector" from 1894 to 1911 at Bonar Bridge, Sutherland, for the Parish of Creich, with total population of 2,013.[33] An inspector of poor was an official who superintended the care of those dependent upon public charity. He had the authority to determine who was in need and to allocate the funds available for the relief of the poor.[34] He served as Registrar for Creich Parish, being the official who kept records of births, marriages, and deaths.[35]

In his visible government post, Ross became a public spokesperson. In his obituary, Ross is said to have been "keenly interested in politics and [he] played an active part in the Conservative Party throughout his term of residence. . . . He strongly advocated protection for England."[36]

The "Valuation Rolls for Creich Parish" at the turn of the century list David Ross as the proprietor of Oriel Villa. Oriel Villa, now known as Blandfield, was built of gray stone — standing near enough to the roadside to afford a view of the horse-drawn traffic, mostly carts, sometimes carriages. In Bonar Bridge, most dwellings of pre-World War I days were constructed of the same gray stone.[37]

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27. W. Ross Napier, letter to author, 12 January 1988. Ross, letter to Beatrice Reeves, 23 January 1963.
28. Ross, letter to Reeves.
29. MacLeish, *National Geographic,* 407.
30. Warfel, *American Novelists of Today,* 365.
31. Reeves, Family Genealogy.
32. *Contemporary Authors* vols. (Detroit: Gate Research Co.), 213.
33. Parochial Register for Scotland, National Library of Scotland. David Ross is also listed as a poor inspector on the "Valuation Rolls for the County of Sutherland, Parish of Creich" in 1899-1900.
34. Reeves, letter to author.
35. Ishbel Ross Murray Matheson, letter to author, 18 April 1988.
36. Obituary, David Ross, *Telegraph-Journal.*
37. Matheson, letter to author.

Bonar Bridge has not changed much in size in a century. The population of the village proper in 1891 was 356.[38] Today it is about 600. During the time the Rosses lived there, Bonar Bridge was a one-street village on the north bank of the river, or more correctly, on the Kyle of Sutherland at the head of Dornoch Firth.[39]

Actually, only a line of houses overlooked the water. However, Bonar Bridge was a thriving place compared to the empty Highlands. The village had a post office — Bonar Village — under the neighboring burgh of Ardgay, with money order, savings bank, and telegraph departments. Other larger structures are a branch of the Caledonian Bank, two hotels, the Drill Hall, and a school.[40]

The village took its name from the bridge spanning the Dornoch Firth. The bridge was constructed in 1811-12 by Telford at a cost of 13,971 pounds, and was washed away on 29 January 1892, its pillars and abutments undermined by an extraordinary flood.[41] A new iron-girder bridge probably was under construction when the Rosses lived in Oriel Villa because the structure was completed by 1901.[42]

This was the picturesque old town that Ishbel referred to when she said Highland chieftains still walked the streets and spoke Gaelic.[43] The chief occupations of the villagers were fishing, farming, and home industries, such as weaving tweed fabrics. Before World War I, there were several tailors, blacksmiths, cobblers, and stonemasons.[44]

Bonar Bridge had seasonal salmon fishing from April to August, work which has been carried on for hundreds of years.[45] During Ishbel's time there, the fishermen lived in neat, smoky, whitewashed houses.[46] There were many crofters, farmers of very small holdings, who derived income from wool and mutton.[47] Stacked by the crofters' countryside shanties were walls of rich brown peat, which provided winter warmth. The men cut "peats" in the spring and the women stacked them to dry. In the fall, much of the fuel was carried to the village homesteads. "Families took pride in having a large, neatly stacked supply in their yards."[48]

There were also local characters. Ishbel and her brother Frank spoke of Georgdie MacNeil, who belonged to a tinker clan encamped at the Sutherlandshire of the elder generation of Rosses. His clan's gypsy van "swung noisily through Bonar Bridge with clanking pots and pans."[49]

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38. *Ordinance Gazetteer of Scotland,* National Library of Scotland, 1901.
39. Reeves, letter to author.
40. Matheson, letter to author.
41. Reeves, letter to author.
42. *Ordinance Gazetter of Scotland,* National Library of Scotland, 1901.
43. Warfel, *American Novelists of Today,* 365.
44. Matheson, letter to author.
45. Ibid.
46. Ross, "The Lifestory of Frank MacKenzie Ross."
47. Ibid.
48. MacLeish, *National Geographic,* 430.
49. Ross, "The Lifestory of Frank MacKenzie Ross."

Making Quite a Change

Ross wrote that Bonar Bridge was quite a change for the farm family — smooth arable land compared to their Ross-shire farm.[50] But, across the narrow strait of water from Oriel Villa, a splendid view of Cam Bhren could be seen, reminding the elder Rosses that they had not left the Highlands. During the harsh winters, the heather-covered crags of Cam Bhren were mantled in snow.[51]

Her father took to the atmosphere of the rural village, for even as a public official, he had a passion for livestock, especially sheep. His inheritance was an avocation for farming that influenced his children, especially Frank, "and led to their lifelong interests in matters relating to the land."[52]

Much of the Highlanders' rural tradition has always been bound up in its sheep farming. The infamous Sutherland Clearances of 1811 to 1820 forced the clearing of many of the glens radiating inland from the head of the Dornoch Firth to make way for sheep. MacLeish said: "Crofters' snug homes once filled the land, but in the early nineteenth century, the prospect of great gain from sheep-raising caused wholesale eviction of the population by landowners. Houses were burned about tenants' heads. . . . Today, Sutherland County averages only six people per square mile."[53]

Displaced crofters were forced to eke out a living along the rocky shore at villages like Bonar Bridge. This displacement occurred throughout the Highlands, but "nowhere was the eviction of crofters managed more brutally than by the factors of the Duke of Sutherland."[54]

The ancient clan system has survived only in the annual clan gatherings, marked by the wearing of the kilt and the tartan, the skirling of the bagpipes, and the dancing of the Highland fling. But, during Ishbel's childhood, the gathering of the clans was a big affair.

The gatherings evoked the paradox of fierce feelings of nationalism while perpetuating the tradition of service to the English queen. When Ishbel's brother Frank became lieutenant governor of British Columbia, he kept many mementos and souvenirs in his Vancouver office. The reminder of the past Frank preferred was a color poster advertising the Invercharon gathering held 15 August 1899, in Ross-shire. It purported to show "how Scotsmen helped to win and hold the Empire" and suggested that those interested should write David Ross, Bonar Village, Ardgay.[55] In fact, the whole family made a trek back to Ross-shire to attend the Invercharron gathering.[56]

At the turn of the century, when the Boer War was raging between the British and the Dutch settlers in South Africa, the clans trained in the village

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50. Ibid.
51. Matheson, letter to author.
52. Ross, "The Lifestory of Frank MacKenzie Ross." See also "New B.C. Governor Scots Farm Boy Who Made Good," *Vancouver Sun,* 8 September 1955.
53. MacLeish, *National Geographic,* 428-429.
54. Ibid., 430.
55. Wright, *Western Business & Industry,* 27.
56. Ross, "The Lifestory of Frank MacKenzie Ross."

hall, which then served as the Drill Hall. Ishbel speaks of the rejoicing when the Empire's soldiers at Mafeking, South Africa, were relieved after a long siege. The villagers at Bonar Bridge watched the burning of an effigy of Kruger, the leader of the Dutch settlers. At least one of Ishbel's brothers attended the Highland Games, and joined in the memorable celebration for Queen Victoria's Jubilee.[57] Soon afterwards, in 1901, the Queen died, and the children marched to school with a black band on their sleeves. Ross later said that the wearing of black was for a dying era.[58]

The children walked half a mile to the school at Bonar Bridge. Attendance was compulsory for those between the ages of five and fourteen.[59] The Bonar Bridge School still stands today up a steep hill, behind the village.[60]

Experiencing a Rural Childhood

The parish school at Bonar Bridge was the public-type school, and its use had been widespread since the end of the seventeenth century. Ishbel refers to her educational background as "the hardy, well-disciplined" kind common to most Scottish children of the time.[61] The school at Bonar Bridge was a typical Highland center of learning, "strongly committed to implicit obedience and exacting scholarship, but bereft of all creature comforts. Hard work, truth, thrift, book learning, and ambition were the admired qualities in these surroundings."[62]

The school children studied while "the wild storms of the North Sea lashed the customarily tranquil village of Bonar Bridge."[63] But, there was time for diversions. The children "skated when there was sufficient ice, rowed in flat-bottomed boats, and sailed when the winds were right."[64] The boys were trained to do the Highland Fling, the Sword Dance, the lancers, the schottische, the polka, and the waltz.[65] Ross recalled that "each year Sanger's Circus came to delight them," and nearby Ardgay had its own picturesque market of historic origin — the Feill-Eitachan.[66]

Ishbel described their endless childhood games at Oriel Villa, activities that reflect a strict upbringing but show their father gave them plenty of time for pastimes of the young. Ishbel said: "Cards and cigarettes were frowned upon, but puzzles, contests, and parlour games, such as droughts, dominoes, and Ludo, abounded. Hoops, ping-pong, and badminton all had their day."[67] In fact, David

57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Matheson, letter to author.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Ross, "The Lifestory of Frank MacKenzie Ross."
67. Ibid.

Ross was later described by a granddaughter as "kind to us"; he "treated us well but was very strict."[68]

The family owned a Parisian Dogcart, one of the first motor cars to be seen in the Highlands. The auto frequently broke down "amid the silver birches and great oaks of the Creich woods between Bonar Bridge and Donoch." Ross suggested that it added spice to these outings, and said it was a change from the family dogcart and wagonette.[69]

Like most farm children, Ishbel and her siblings helped their parents with chores.[70] Morning came early, with work before school. MacLeish writes about the working life of the Scottish farm family, and this must have been the daily fare of the Rosses: "If darkness comes late to the Highlands by mid-Spring, dawn comes early. At seven the sun has been up so long that conscience rousts a man from his bed and launches him into a new sixteen-hour day."[71]

Chores filled the even longer days of summer "when butterflies flitted through the cabbage roses in the Ross garden and the flower beds glowed with colour. There was weeding to be done in the kitchen garden, white rabbits to feed, bees to be tended, fruit to be picked, Shetland ponies to be groomed, and at times sheep to be herded on the moors and hillsides."[72] The family was self-sufficient. Virtually every single ingredient of a Highland "high tea" except the salt and the pepper and the tea leaves was produced in the glens and valleys in which they lived.[73]

At all seasons of the year they walked miles across the moors and "learned the meaning of long hours in church and Sunday School." Ishbel said she went to church twice every Sunday and to Wednesday night prayer meeting.[74] They had family prayers, were "extraordinarily well versed in the Bible and Shorter Catechism," and they joined the Band of Hope when a temperance movement swept through Britain.[75]

The independence of mind, like the democratic temper of the people, was reflected in the church the Rosses attended. All the Presbyterian ministers were of equal rank. While the English had bishops, the Scots had assemblies. Where English doctrines were vague, the Scots were uncompromising.

Years later, Ishbel told a friend that she had a disciplined, but "democratic instruction in morality." They had been discussing the feverish gossip resulting from the Slocum-Powell nuptials, an event that kept Washington buzzing for months during 1969.[76] Ishbel declared: "I was brought

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68. Reeves, letter to author.
69. Ibid.
70. Wright, *Western Business & Industry,* 24.
71. MacLeish, *National Geographic,* 405.
72. Ross, "The Lifestory of Frank MacKenzie Ross."
73. Robertson, "Scotland, Lands and People," 117.
74. Ross, letter to Willa Beall, 23 August 1971.
75. Ross, "The Lifestory of Frank MacKenzie Ross."
76. The marriage of a black man, Adam Clayton Powell III, son of Congressman Adam Powell, to a white woman, Beryl Slocum, generated a lot of hate mail.

up in Scotland to be without any prejudice of that sort."[77] However, she then added a word of paternalism: "All men are God's chillun, so far as I am concerned."[78]

About her specific religious indoctrination, Ishbel said, "I remember nothing of it at all. This went on for years and years, but it vanished in a way that my other instruction in Scotland has not."[79]

Catching a Train To Tain

After attending Bonar Bridge School, the children enrolled in Tain Royal Academy, at the Royal Burgh of Tain, fourteen miles away. The children walked a mile to the Ardgay Railway Station to catch a 7:20 a.m. train. They returned after six at night, with homework still to be done.[80]

Perhaps to be closer to the school or because of the family's improved status, the Rosses moved across the Kyle River to Ardgay, and lived in Ardgay House.[81]

Frank was admitted to Tain Royal Academy in August 1905 and David followed a year later. Ishbel was admitted to the academy on 27 August 1907, by her father.[82] There are no records of other Ross children in the Academy, or at least none from Oriel Villa.[83]

The academy had been founded nearly a century earlier, on 9 April 1809, by thirty-six noblemen and gentlemen connected with Sutherland-shire, Ross-shire and the northern counties. Thirteen were holders of property in the United States or the West Indies.[84] Some of the prominent figures among the early directors of the academy were also prominent in enforcing the evictions of crofters to make way for sheep in the Highland Clearances.[85] Tain opened its doors on 15 February 1813, to 135 scholars in its first session.[86]

During Ishbel's time, the attendance stood at about 130 to 160.[87] The headmaster at Tain was Andrew H. Hutt, a noted classicist with "exacting standards," according to Ishbel. There was a staff of six more for the "Higher Department." Other instructors covered mathematics, science, English, modern languages, art, music theory, and crafts — cardboard modeling, needlework, and singing. There was also a visiting gymnastics teacher.[88]

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77. Ross, letter to H.B. Fant, 18 June 1969.
78. Ibid.
79. Ross, letter to Beall.
80. Ross, "The Lifestory of Frank MacKenzie Ross."
81. Ibid.
82. W. Ross Napier, letter to author, 12 January 1988.
83. Ibid.
84. Napier, "Decline and Fall of a Classics Master," *Scottish Educational Journal,* 15 September 1972.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid.
87. Prospectus, Tain Royal Academy, Session 1913-1914.
88. Ross, "The Lifestory of Frank MacKenzie Ross."

The English curriculum included Scott's *Marmion*; Stevenson's *Treasure Island*; Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar, King John,* and *As You Like It*; the *Spectator,* Roger de Coverley's *Deserted Village* and *Traveller*; George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*; Bryon's *Chide Harold*; Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* and *Stories of King Arthur*; Lamb's *Essays of Elia*; and Chaucer's *Prologue.* Latin included Caesar's *Gallic War IV* and *V,* and Erasmus' *Colloquia*; French, *Le Voyage of de M. Perrichon,* and other readings.[89]

Ross makes no mention of studying Gaelic or learning it from her father. However, she once said that even if her name is Gaelic that did not mean that she could speak one word of the language.[90] The Ross children learned Latin and French at Tain. They read widely and could be said to have had a classical education. Ishbel told Barbara Bannon in that final interview, "We are very bookish in the Highlands; I was sunk in the classics."[91] She told a newspaper reporter:

> In my childhood we grew up on limp leather editions of the classics, and read them over and over, because we lacked the great diversity and wealth of material available now. Unlike the young of today, we had plenty of time for reading, too. It was good fare — the best — but we didn't have the bright and animated look at the world that the libraries supply today.[92]

Haunting a Free Library

Ishbel grew up within ten miles of Skibo Castle, Andrew Carnegie's summer home. Carnegie was a Scottish-born philanthropist who had made a fortune in American steel, then retired to Scotland. Ishbel was among the first to benefit by the earliest of Carnegie's free libraries. She would "haunt the libraries and read everything she could get her hands on."[93] She once told a friend, "I can't remember having read George Eliot's *Scenes from Clerical Life,* although no doubt I did at some point in my youth, for I read them all, and twenty times over."[94] The local free library "was manna from heaven for the rather bookish Highland children who went backwards and forwards through the standard sets of Scott and Dickens and Thackeray that lurked behind glass-fronted book cases and had a sealed-up look."[95]

The Waverly novels comprised the standard set written by Sir Walter Scott. The first was published in 1818; twenty-seven volumes completed the

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89. Prospectus, Tain Royal Academy.
90. Warfel, *American Novelists of Today,* 365.
91. Bannon, "The Career of a Biographer," 6.
92. Eleanor Adams, "Chit and Chat," *Cincinnati Enquirer,* 6 January 1963,11-H.
93. Mary Engels, "First Novel: A Best-Seller," *New York Daily News,* 30 January 1970, 56.
94. Ross, letter to Harold Geyer, 5 October 1972.
95. Ross, "An Address to the Friends of the Cincinnati Public Library," in *Bulletin of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* 21 (April 1963): 81.

set. Ishbel could not remember how many times she had read the Waverly novels, except she said, "I would go from first to last and then work my way backwards again through the volumes."[96]

The novels are about conflicts between cultures, such as between the new commercial English upperclass and the earthy old Scottish peasant culture.

The Ross children shared in the seasonal excitement of world-famous characters driving past their home. The young Ishbel watched the coaches, then later, the early motor cars, come near their home, "carrying beautiful American women and illustrious guests" heading for Skibo Castle.[97] Ishbel said: "it might be Rudyard Kipling or George Bernard Shaw, King Edward VII or Madame Melba, Charles Edison or Lord Balfour, but these visitors from the larger world brought the American continent close to the lives of the local children."[98]

Carnegie's holdings encompassed some of the finest shooting boxes of the British aristocracy. Although Carnegie did not believe in shooting himself, he allowed his guests to use the shooting boxes.[99]

Near the Ross home, there was one of the earliest golf courses in the north of Scotland. Ishbel said Harry Vardon and other world champions of the era competed on the famous course at Dornoch.[100]

Much of the local lore bespoke of the doings of those up at Carnegie's castle and on the greens, and the lives of the villagers were affected in ways both great and small. Ishbel once recalled the excitement when her father and older brothers helped rescue Lady Violet Spencer, a lost lady balloonist, from a Highland bog.[101] Ishbel wrote: "[S]he had come down all tangled up in ropes. I can remember looking over the balustrades and watching her being led into our hall, with her dark wet hair streaming to her waist and her clothes sopping wet."[102]

Ishbel also remembered seeing Rudyard Kipling walking his children in the Far Highlands, and thinking, "Oh, to write like him someday."[103] Her own father was a writer, and no doubt influenced her through his own example. David Ross was well-known in England and Scotland as a contributor to the *London Times, Edinburgh Scotsman,* and *Inverness Northern Chronicle.*[104] Ishbel said: "I cannot remember the time I did not want to be a writer. I was hideous in math and the sciences, but my English teacher allowed me to devote special time to reading in the heather under a willow tree."[105]

Ishbel was somewhat in awe of her brother Frank because he was a genius with figures. He did not excel in other subjects, but he studied doggedly.

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96. Ibid.
97. Ross, "The Lifestory of Frank MacKenzie Ross."
98. Ibid.
99. Bannon, "The Career of a Biographer," 6.
100. Ross, "The Lifestory of Frank MacKenzie Ross."
101. Ibid.
102. Ross, letter to H.B. Fant, 21 July 1969.
103. Engels, *New York Daily News,* 56.
104. Obituary, David Ross, *Telegraph-Journal.*
105. Bannon, "The Career of a Biographer," 6.

Although shy, he was friendly and helpful, a good sport, a tireless athlete, and liked by his classmates.[106]

Frank left Tain Royal Academy on 12 November 1908, to go into commercial banking. He landed at Montreal, Canada, on 5 January 1910. He was nineteen years old.[107]

Following Frank to Canada

The family followed Frank to Canada. David finished his studies at Tain on 5 May 1910.[108] The Ross family left for Canada soon after that, except Ishbel, who is believed to have remained in school while residing at Ardgay House, where documentation shows she continued to receive mail throughout 1911.[109]

Why did the Ross family leave Scotland at a time when David Ross was apparently doing well as a farmer, public spokesman, and public official? There is a general explanation, of course: the Highland's greatest export is Highlanders.[110] Scotland has been characterized by a steady population drain since the Highland Clearances of the early 1800s.[111] Many of the displaced crofters had bitterly left their homesteads to make way for thousands of their lairds' sheep. They had no place to go. They were often forced by necessity to emigrate to Canada or the United States.

Perhaps the ultimate reason was better opportunity for the Ross children. Ishbel once wrote that Frank went to Canada because some of his friends were already working in banks in the Dominion: "All were strongly empire-conscious young Scots full of drive and ambition who felt the need for room and opportunity to improve their own condition and spread their wings."[112] W. Ross Napier hinted at another reason, saying that the change of address was perhaps caused by the position David Ross held as tax collector. He wrote:

> I have been in touch with a lady in Bonar Bridge, who met some relatives — nieces — of the Rosses, either last year or comparatively recently. The Bonar Bridge lady hinted at some sort of scandal in connection with David Ross, the father. He may have been a tax-gatherer, and could this have been why the family moved to Canada? In Ishbel's memoir her father is described as a public official, and on rereading it there is very

106. Ross, "The Lifestory of Frank MacKenzie Ross."
107. "Ex-Lt.-Gov. Frank Ross mourned by top Canadians," *Vancouver Sun,* 13 December 1971, 11. See also Wright, *Western Business & Industry,* 24.
108. Napier, letter to author.
109. Reeves, letter to author.
110. MacLeish, *National Geographic,* 411.
111. Ibid.
112. Ross, "The Lifestory of Frank MacKenzie Ross."

> little concrete about the father or his business, which one might have expected to be there.[113]

The unpublished memoir Napier refers to was written by Ishbel for Tain Royal Academy in 1969, a memoir about her brother Frank, who distinguished himself as the academy's outstanding graduate.

Tax collectors are not popular. David Ross also had the stigma of being a Conservative politician who "helped to win and hold the Empire," a stance that undoubtedly rankled generations of those displaced by the Highland Clearances. Napier added this curious note about the lady at Bonar Bridge: "Whatever the 'scandal' was, she told me that Frank came back and settled matters honorably!"[114]

No matter the cause, the family fortunes had set sail for the Western horizon. Ishbel wrote that the transition from Scotland to Canada had its own element of shock and stimulation.[115] Ishbel left the academy in November 1911. Her reason for leaving the school in school records was cited as "gone to Canada." There is an interesting remark from the Academy Logbook, dated 20 October 1911: "Ishbel Ross is not to be allowed to sit for Special Leaving unless after two years of study." Napier, presently of Tain, said, "Twelve days later she left the Academy!"[116]

Napier added, "I take this to mean that she wanted to sit the Leaving Certificate exams without completing the normal course of study, and not getting permission to do so, she left and went to Canada, not yet being sixteen."[117] The permission was withheld on a small technicality: Ishbel turned sixteen that December, within a short two weeks. According to later biographical references, Ishbel was graduated from Tain.[118] Ishbel soon joined her family in Toronto, and she worked there for several years. She wrote publicity releases for the Canadian Food Board for a year. She obtained a position working in the library of the *Toronto Daily News.*[119] One day the editors needed someone to cover the visit of Emmaline Pankhurst, who was on a lecture tour. Ross was asked to meet her train at Buffalo before the suffragist arrived in Toronto. She scooped the other journalists, and this ultimately led to her editor writing a letter of recommendation that she carried with her on her job search in New York.

As the Ross family stepped out of Scottish antiquity into Canadian modernity, they never forgot the old ways. None could match Ishbel in describing her Highland home in the context of modern change. She wrote her

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113. Napier, letter to author, 12 January 1988.
114. Ibid.
115. Ross, "The Lifestory of Frank MacKenzie Ross."
116. Napier, letter to author, 12 January 1988.
117. Ibid.
118. Stanley Walker, *City Editor* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1934), 288. See also Warfel, *American Novelists of Today,* 365.
119. Harry R. Warfel, *American Novelists of Today* (New York: American Book Co., 1951), 365.

own Waverly themes, edged with nostalgia. One of the first news articles Ishbel wrote after coming to work in Manhattan featured the locale of Bonar Bridge; and strangely enough, the story was about Andrew Carnegie.

Writing About Carnegie's Skibo

The philanthropist died on 11 August 1919, shortly after Ishbel arrived in New York. Carnegie's death was one of the major news stories the year. The philanthropist's will, made public 28 August, left his widow his Fifth Avenue, New York, home, country homes in Bar Harbor and Lenow, and castle and lands at Skibo. An appraisal of Carnegie's estate, made public 23 October 1920, assigned a value of $23,247,161.[120]

Ross had been in the right place at the right time to report about a facet of Carnegie's life as she had come to understand it as a child on the Highlands. As a young freelancer, under the name of Isabel M. Ross, Ishbel wrote a feature article called "Skibo Castle and Its Laird in Tartan," which appeared in the *New York Times Magazine,* 11 August 1919. The article is of major importance because it was her first article in the New York newspapers. It launched her career in the States. The *Times* article reflected her ability to tell the story of Carnegie with a quiet command of the English language and an understanding of the Scotttish culture in which Carnegie lived in long vacations away from the United States, typically from June to October. In it she described Skibo, Carnegie's turreted castle, partly "buried in ivy." His simple life and even more spartan meals (boiled rice was a favorite) were pictured through her eyes and those of the townspeople. He maintained his aloofness from those with their hands out to him for financial help, but showed a "weakness for genius," often hosting an "impecunious poet" or King Edward or other vagabond American millionaire acquaintances. The article gave her a clip to help her obtain her job at the *New York Tribune.* She was in the right place at the right time to begin a career of reporting on major events in, and on newsmakers of, America, covering history in the making for almost sixty years in her unforgetable style.

The author is an assistant professor of journalism at New Mexico State University.

120. Mark Sullivan, "The Twenties," *Our Times,* vol. 6 (New York and London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 520.

The Rhetoric of Independence and Boosterism in Late Nineteenth-Century California Journalism

By Jeffrey B. Rutenbeck

In an attempt to better understand the historical shift of American newspapers from their patronage-dependent, partisan roots of the early nineteen century to their emerging circulation-dependent model of the late nineteenth century, this article examines the rhetorical dimensions of political independence as it was asserted by a majority of late nineteenth-century California newspapers, particularly as it related to the ideology of boosterism. It concludes that boosterism provided California newspapers with an important ideological stepping stone to political independence, signaling the end of political partisanship as the dominant public and self concept of newspapers at that time.

The move toward a more politically independent, commercially viable press represents one of the most important transformations in the late nineteenth-century American press. This move has been studied in various ways, most recently as an economic reorientation that supported and was bolstered by the growing commercial economy of the 1870s, 1880s and 1890s.[1] Little has been done to explore the ideological dimensions of this emerging independent press, an ideology that both reflected and reinforced these important changes in the journalistic enterprise. News emerged as the primary concern of late nineteenth-century American newspapers, marking the decline of political partisanship and the emergence of mass journalism. Political independence emerged as an essential element of this evolving operating ideology, providing

1. Gerald J. Baldasty, *The Commercialization of News in the Nineteenth Century* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).

the social and political justifications for breaking the historically intimate relationship between newspapers and political parties.[2]

Most early nineteenth-century American newspapers defined their purpose according to the mandates of politicians and political parties.[3] However, by the latter third of the century political independence and commercialization became driving forces behind many newspaper enterprises. Commercialization and political independence meant radically altered political and social roles for newspapers.[4] The identification and cultivation of these new roles is of particular concern in this article. More specifically, this article examines how California newspapers justified and explained their expanded commercial and social roles while, at the same time, distancing themselves from the political party system that had given them life earlier in the century.

Using California as its primary focus, this article explores this shift by examining statistical and rhetorical dimensions of newspapers' changing roles in the 1870s, the decade of most dramatic change in these areas. This study examines the increasing independence asserted by California newspapers during this period and its possible relationship to the growing commercial focus of the practice of journalism more generally. It explores how the rhetoric of independence and boosterism might be connected to overall structural changes taking place in journalism at that time. Some crucial questions this research addresses include: What types of changes concerning political affiliation were taking place in California at this time? How did newspapers explain and rationalize to their readers the changes taking place? What role did economics or boosterism play in the formulation of these explanations and rationalizations? If newspapers were no longer mere extensions of the political party machinery, whom did they claim they were going to serve and how?

California provides an interesting context in which to ask such questions. While many of its journalistic roots were transplanted by Easterners who moved west, western publishers were more isolated from the resources and institutions of eastern journalism, the boom-town dynamic created an unstable

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2. See Jeffrey B. Rutenbeck, "Newspaper Trends of the 1870s: Proliferation, Populatization and Political Independence," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 72 (1995): 361-375; "The Stagnation and Decline of Partisanship in American Journalism," *American Journalism* 10 (1993): 38-60; "Editorial Perception of Newspaper Independence: Twelve Major Newspapers and the Presidential Election of 1872," *Journalism History* (in press); "Toward a History of the Ideologies of Partisanship and Independence in American Journalism," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 15 (1991): 5-18.

3. William Ames, *A History of the National Intelligencer* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972); Culver Smith, *The Press, Politics, and Patronage: The American Government's Use of Newspapers, 1789-1875* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1977); Gerald Baldasty, "The Press and Politics in the Age of Jackson," *Journalism Monographs* 89 (1984).

4. See Gerald J. Baldasty and Jeffrey B. Rutenbeck, "Money, Politics and Newspapers: The Business Environment of Press Partisanship in the Late 19th Century," *Journalism History* 15, no. 2-3 (1988): 60-69.

social and economic environment, and western newspapers were in a position to play a more prominent role in community building.[5]

Another important factor in the development of California journalism is the prominence of boosterism and its apparent connections to the rhetoric of political independence. This connection between boosterism and political independence has been suggested by Don Harrison Doyle in *The Social Order of a Frontier Community*. Doyle examines the essential role boosterism played in the development and maintenance of Jacksonville, Illinois, between 1825 and 1870, describing how boosterism provided an important connection between "individual opportunity" and the "collective destiny of the town."[6]

> Compared to the cult of individual success, with its vision of unlimited opportunity, the ideology of boosterism was pragmatic: it recognized that one town's success took place at the expense of its rivals. Accordingly, the local press devoted much attention to deliberately discrediting rival towns, rejoicing over their failures and misfortunes, and jealously denouncing any unfair advantage they had gained in a race where only a few winners would be recognized.[7]

Doyle recognizes that a "necessary corollary" to the boosters' visions was belief that internal dissent, whether it be personal or political, would undermine booster efforts to promote local interests.[8] Here we see in Doyle's work the important recognition of a connection between boosterism and political independence — an observation worthy of further investigation.

This article attempts to argue several interconnected points. First, much editorial matter during this period was devoted to explaining and rationalizing the shift from a partisan to an independent model in the hopes of installing a more socially, politically, and economically viable model in which newspapers could operate. Second, it is within these rationalizations and explanations that the historian can uncover ways editors and publishers positioned themselves in a changing world; the rhetoric reveals conceptions of the past and visions for the future. Such an approach also provides insight into ways newspapers deliberately sought to expand their social, political, and economic influence by explaining the terms upon which newspapers wanted to be accepted. Third, such a focus suggests future research might productively

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5. See Barbara Cloud, *The Business of Newspapers on the Western Frontier* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1992), xiii. Also see Michael P. Malone, "Beyond the Last Frontier: Toward a New Approach to Western History," *Western Historical Quarterly* 20 (1989): 409-427.
6. Don Harrison Doyle, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois, 1825-1870* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 60.
7. Ibid., 63.
8. Doyle, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community,* 63.

examine the ways in which such structural and ideological changes are connected.[9]

The Rise of Independent Newspapers in California

As California political historian R. Hal Williams states, "[e]xpansive confidence in the future gave a special cast to California politics."[10] Political life was dominated by the Democrats in California's early years. By the time California was admitted as a state in September 1850, Democrats controlled both houses of the legislature. During the 1850s and 1860s California was populated by thousands of eastern Americans who brought their own political institutions and experience. Following the long tradition of eastern politics, organizations established by both the Democrats and Republicans were propelled by a system of public patronage often based upon corruption, favoritism, and bribes. Unregulated development of the state's vast natural resources during the first few decades of statehood did much to attract profiteers and those seeking a better life. Growth in the mining and oil industries and a burgeoning agricultural system in the 1850s and 1860s provided inviting welcome mats, but California's boom and bust economic cycles made life difficult for just about everyone.[11]

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9. As William Lyon characterizes Oliver Knight's approach to understanding frontier journalism, town boosting went far beyond "puffery" to encourage and stimulate immigration and capitalistic development in their region. (William H. Lyon, "The Significance of Newspapers on the American Frontier," *Journal of the West* 19 (1980): 9.

10. R. Hal Williams, *The Democratic Party and California Politics* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1931), 2. See Bernard L. Hyink, et. al. *Politics and Government in California* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979); John H. Culver and John C. Syer, *Power and Politics in California* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1980); Spencer C. Olin, Jr., *California Politics, 1846-1920: The Emerging Corporate State* (San Francisco: Boyd & Fraser Publishing Co., 1983); Royce D. Delmatier, et. al., *The Rumble of California Politics, 1848-1970* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1970); Daniel A. Cornford, *Workers and Dissent in the Redwood Empire* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987); Gerald Stanley, "The Republican Party in California, 1856-68," (Ph.D. diss., University of Arizona, 1973). Richard Orsi, "Selling the Golden State: A Study of Boosterism in 19th Century California," (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1973), makes the case that once California's economic growth slowed in the 1870s, Californians made an even greater attempt to portray their state's future as one of promise.

11. Walton Bean, *California: An Interpretive History,* 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978), 161. In 1848 California's population, other than Indians, was fewer than 15,000. The Federal Census of 1850 counted 93,000 inhabitants. Several county returns for that census were lost, so in all probability the total was somewhat higher. In 1852 the State of California took its own census and counted 223,856 inhabitants. For 1860 the U.S. census figure was more 380,000, and for 1870 more than 560,000.

The Republican Party, founded in 1854, established party organizations to compete more effectively in local and state elections.[12] Regardless of party lines, state politics in the 1850s, concludes historian Edward Staniford, "operated in an atmosphere of self-interest, provincialism, lax morality, and unrestrained exuberance."[13] Operating in this spirit, during these first two decades California state government was notable for its alliance with private business, namely the railroads. Railroad owners in the 1850s and 1860s secured from the legislature looser requirements for the formation of railroad businesses and many other concessions that greatly benefited railroad companies.[14]

The 1870s was a decade of economic and political upheaval in California. The boom of the gold rush had gone bust by the early 1870s — a problem compounded by a national economic slump that started in 1873 and spread to California by 1875.[15] The economic turmoil of the 1870s had a profound impact on California politics. It encouraged the rise of numerous splinter parties, disrupted established political patterns, and led all parties to adopt positions on the railroad and Chinese issues. "By the end of the decade no party platform could fail to include a vigorous denunciation of railroad oppression and a demand for increased government regulation of corporate affairs."[16]

Because expansion in California was uneven — most development favored the northern part of state — the remainder of the century was to see political changes that had much to do with a continual struggle for power.[17] Newspapers in California had much at stake in this struggle. They were confronted with the task of divorcing themselves from the traditions of partisanship and party loyalty while, at the same time, persuading the reading public to accept them as political authorities, cultural solidifiers, and local boosters.

By 1869, Democratic dominance in politics and journalism had given way to Republican successes.[18] Reflecting a general trend in the northern and western press, the most significant development in political affiliation in

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12. Olin, *California Politics, 1846-1920,* 19. For more on political organization in San Francisco, see William Issel and Robert W. Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

13. Olin, *California Politics, 1846-1920,* 15. The Republican's first successful bid for power in California came in 1860 behind a popular vote in the state that went to Lincoln by only 643 of the 119,876 votes cast. That year also saw a Republican sweep of most offices, including the governorship.

14. Ibid., 30.

15. Royce D. Delmatier, et.al., *The Rumble of California Politics, 1848-1970* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1970), 70.

16. Williams, *The Democratic Party and California Politics,* 18.

17. Ibid., 3. California's depression continued until the land boom and railroad competition of the late 1880s.

18. Spencer C. Olin, Jr., *California Politics, 1846-1920: The Emerging Corporate State* (San Francisco: Boyd & Fraser Publishing Co., 1983), 15.

California in the years immediately following the Civil War was the increase in independent and nonaffiliated newspapers and the stagnation or decline in the number of partisan ones.[19]

Data from Rowell's *American Newspaper Directory* indicate that in 1869, party-affiliated newspapers outnumbered independent and nonaffiliated ones seventy-two to thirty-two, yet by 1879 independent and nonaffiliated papers outnumbered the party newspapers 118 to sixty-nine. While the 1880s and 1890s saw an even more dramatic increase in the number of independent and nonaffiliated newspapers, it was during the 1870s that for the first time the scales were tipped away from party affiliation toward independence and non-affiliation.[20]

Number of Newspapers by Affiliation
Published at Least Once A Week
California — 1869, 1879, 1892, 1903

	Ind	Dem	Repub	None	Other[21]	
1869	15%(20)	26.3%(35)	22.8%(37)	9%(12)	21.8%(29)	N=133
1879	22.8%(50)	14.6%(32)	16.9%(37)	31.1%(68)	14.6%(32)	N=219
1892	31.6%(137)	11.6%(50)	17.5%(76)	21%(91)	18.3%(79)	N=433
1903	26.2%(127)	9.0%(43)	23.7%(115)	16.4%(80)	24.7%(120)	N=485

More specifically, data for the years 1869 through 1879 reveal slight decreases in party-affiliated newspapers (especially Democratic) during the middle of the decade and a more or less steady increase in the number of independent and nonaffiliated ones.

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19. See Jeffrey B. Rutenbeck, "The Rise of Independent Newspapers in the 1870s: A Transformation in American Journalism," (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1990), 60-71, 183-243.

20. The categories "ind" and "none" require further explanation. "Ind" indicates newspapers that listed themselves as "independent" Newspapers listed as "none" included no political descriptor for themselves in Rowell's *Directory,* but inmost cases (as reflected in their own pages) considered themselves to be independent. The category of "none" represents a significant portion of the data in this regard. Many newspapers omitted any reference to political affiliation, probably documenting their unwillingness to operate under tradition party labels. An independent label often indicated a desire to stay active in the political realm, but from an independent perspective. It appears that, in some instances, no affiliation indicated a similar position. The *Grass Valley Foothill Tidings,* for example, listed itself in Rowell's 1874-1876, without any political affiliation but called itself "Independent" in its own pages (from 1877-1879 it listed itself as "independent). See the *Grass Valley Foothills Tidings,* 10 January 1874, 3.

21. "Other" refers to commercial, sporting, advertising, other political, and miscellaneous newspapers.

Number of newspapers by affiliation in California, 1869-1879

	Ind	Dem	Repub	None	Other	
1869	15%(20)	26.3%(35)	27.8%(37)	9%(12)	21.8%(29)	N=133
1870	15.6%(19)	20.5%(25)	29.5%(36)	13.1%(16)	21.3%(26)	N=122
1871	15.1%(23)	17.8%(27)	23%(35)	26.3%(40)	17.8%(27)	N=152
1872	13.6%(21)	15.6%(24)	25.3%(39)	29.9%(46)	15.6%(24)	N=154
1873	17.2%(25)	13.8%(20)	24.1%(35)	29.7%(43)	15.2%(22)	N=145
1874	19.4%(31)	12.5%(20)	19.3%(31)	36.3%(58)	12.5%(20)	N=160
1875	19.1%(31)	13.6%(22)	17.3%(28)	39.5%(64)	10.5%(17)	N=162
1876	17.0%(31)	12.6%(23)	20.3%(37)	35.7%(65)	14.3%(26)	N=182
1877	21.9%(42)	16.8%(32)	18.8%(36)	25.1%(48)	17.3%(33)	N=191
1878	24.0%(50)	13.5%(28)	18.3%(38)	30.3%(63)	13.9%(29)	N=208
1879	22.8%(50)	14.6%(32)	16.9%(37)	31.1%(68)	14.6%(32)	N=219

Overall, the 1870s represent a fruitful period to examine the first years of the shift from party affiliation toward political independence and nonaffiliation in California journalism.

Gerald Baldasty suggests that partisanship endured in the larger metropolitan areas and in county seats (which were often larger towns and cities), where state government structure, patronage, and broad reader interest continued to extend some of the benefits for party affiliation into the late nineteenth century.[22] Rowell data for California suggest that party affiliation among newspapers was most common in county seats as early as the 1870s. County seats in California were the most hospitable towns for newspaper publishing, fostering the growth of 77 percent of all newspapers in California during this period. Between 1869 and 1879, almost 87 percent of all Democratic newspapers in existence were published in county seats, with only 13 percent published in towns that weren't county seats; 71 percent of all Republican papers were published in county seats. Towns that weren't county seats were most likely to be home to independent and nonaffiliated newspapers.[23] Even

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22. Baldasty, *The Commercialization of News in the Nineteenth Century,* 133.

23. Total Number of Newspaper Units published in California by Affiliation and County Seat Status, 1869-1879:

	Ind	**Dem**	**Repub**	**None**	**Other**	**All**
County seat	70%	86.5%	71.3%	66.6%	99.3%	76.5%
	(241)	(250)	(278)	(349)	(283)	(1401)
Not county seat	30%	13.5%	28.7%	33.4%	0.7%	23.5%
	(103)	(39)	(111)	(175)	(2)	(431)
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(344)	(289)	(390)	(524)	(285)	(1832)

The term "newspaper units" indicates the occurrence of each publication for each year, therefore one newspaper that was published every year from 1869 to 1879

though the number of party-affiliated newspapers endured in county seats, their dominance was steadily being challenged by emerging independent and nonaffiliated newspapers.

The trend toward political independence and a decline in party affiliation was evident in other states during this period. New York, Ohio, and Illinois each saw a dramatic increase in the number of independent and nonaffiliated newspapers and a decline in the number of Republican and Democratic journals.[24] Political historian Michael McGerr observes this same trend, noting that by 1891, nineteen of the twenty-eight metropolitan journals in the United States with a circulation of 50,000 or more also claimed to be independent.[25] These changes can be attributed not only to the increasing economic focus of the press during this period, but also to what several historians call a growing disgust with the "Gilded Age" of American politics.[26] The local and national scandals of the late 1860s and early and mid-1870s aroused furor against political corruption, particular)y government's shady dealing with the railroads.[27] The party system was under fire as a primary source of such corruption. Many politicians and many newspaper publishers, in the spirit of reform, sought to distance themselves from the machinery of party politics.[28]

The Rhetoric of Independence and Boosterism in Early California Newspapers

Much of the rhetoric contained in early California papers concerning the meaning of independence was similar to the rhetoric appearing in the eastern and middle western press of the 1870s.[29] It. focused on the shortcomings of political parties, the importance of independent thinking, the perceived increase

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would count as eleven total units. San Francisco accounted for 93 percent of all "other" types of newspaper units, which included other political, sports, commercial, advertising, religious, etc. In total, San Francisco accounted for 27.5 percent (504) of all newspaper units during this period.

24. Rutenbeck, *Newspaper Trends of the 1870s,* 361-375.

25. Michael E. McGerr, *The Decline of Popular Politics; The American North, 1865-1928* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 121.

26. See Matthew Josephson, *The Politicos, 1865-1896* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1938), and John A. Garraty, *The New Commonwealth, 1877-1890* (New York: Harper, 1968).

27. Richard L. McCormick, *The Party Period and Public Policy; American Politics from the Age of Jackson to the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 324.

28. John G. Sproat, *"The Best Men:" Liberal Reformers in the Gilden Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 48.

29. For some examples of the rhetoric focusing on the shortcomings of party loyalty and the political dimensions of independence, see the *Quincy Plumas National,* 2 July 1870; the *Gilroy Advocate,* 2 July 1870; *Sonora Tuolomne Independent,* 6 April 1872; *Mariposa Gazette,* 17 May 1872 and 24 May 1872; *Watsonville Pajaronian,* 22 August 1872; *Grass Valley Foothill Tidings,* 10 January 1874; *San Jose Weekly Mercury,* 3 December 1874; and *Santa Cruz Local Item,* 16 April 1875.

of journalism's political clout, and the assertion that independence did *not* mean neutrality; they asserted the right of newspaper editors and publishers to break away from the shackles of party dictation.[30] In addition to these concerns, rhetoric about independence in California journalism was connected with a movement not appearing as prominently in the eastern press — boosterism.

Richard Dykstra asserts "booster spirit" was an important journalistic undertaking in the West and a matter of "promotional routine."[31] In the 1860s and 1870s, California newspapers were intimately tied with booster efforts to encourage development of local and state resources. California was hungry for new citizens. In the early years of boosterism when few municipalities had formal promotional organizations, such as chambers of commerce, newspapers often undertook the effort to attract eastern immigrants to California generally, and to their own towns specifically.[32] Newspaper exchange made it possible for California newspapers to send their sheets back east to be read in hotels, train stations, and other reading rooms, and many did. For example, the *Oroville Mercury,* an independent paper founded in 1873 which absorbed the Republican *Butte Record,* wrote several articles for a conspicuously nonlocal audience under the regular heading of "Our County," which described in detail the area's history and economic potential.[33]

The dramatic, yet spasmodic, economic growth in the early years of California not only produced dozens of new towns, but also produced a need for instant civic awareness, community spirit, and more residents.[34] Newspapers were suited to address the latter need, and many provided valuable publicity and community building functions from the 1870s onward.[35] Establishing their newspapers as promotional publications, editors and publishers became pioneers of development throughout the West, especially on behalf of their community

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30. See Rutenbeck, "Editorial Perception of Newspaper Independence and the Presidential Campaign of 1872."

31. Richard Dykstra, *The Cattle Towns* (New York: Knopf, 1968), 149.

32. See Remi Nadeau, *Los Angeles: From Mission to Modern City* (New York: Longman, 1960), 69. Besides San Francisco, Los Angeles was on of the first cities to form a municipal promotional organization. A precursor to the chamber of commerce, the Los Angeles Board of Trade was formed in 1873 by Robert M. Widney and John B. Downey.

33. Also see the *Oroville Mercury,* 6 November 1873, 3; 8 January 1875, 3; and 31 December 1875, 3.

34. Halaas notes that editors working in country hamlets of the East operated in a stable and predictable environment compared to frontier editors in the West in David Halaas, *Boom Town Newspapers: Journalism on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier, 1859-1881* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1981), 101.

35. Orsi, "Selling the Golden State: A Study of Boosterism in 19th Century California," 478. Also see Oliver Knight, "The *Owhyee Avalanche:* The Frontier Newspaper as a Catalyst in Social Change," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 58 (1967): 74-81. Cloud points out that the existence of a newspaper could change the status of a settlement, promoting it from camp to community *(The Business of Newspapers on the American Frontier,* 5).

and region.[36] Richard Orsi claims that boosterism in California during the last half of the nineteenth century was "engendered not only by the great potential for profit and growth that the state possessed, but also the instability, frustration, and unfulfilled expectations which accompanied the process of settling the American West."[37] California historian Remi Nadeau dubbed boosterism in this period as "California's first and most successful homegrown religion."[38] Newspapers played an integral role in the development and spread of this new faith.[39]

While very early California journalism reflected the party press structure of the American Northeast, there were many newspapers asserting a different role for the state's press. In an attempt to locate newspaper issues most likely to contain editorial material explaining the newspaper's political, social, and economic roles, the newspapers examined here were selected along the following lines: they changed from partisan to independent or nonaffiliated newspapers during the period studied (1869-1879), they changed owners during the period studied, or they established themselves as independent or nonaffiliated newspapers during the period studied. Issues of the newspapers were examined for the period immediately following a switch or establishment in the hopes of discovering the papers' rhetorical stance on the issues of partisanship and boosterism.[40]

While some newspapers asserted their political independence in the very early years of California journalism, as the Rowell data show, the 1870s was a decade of tremendous movement away from partisan affiliation.[41] The *Castroville Argus,* established in 1869, avoided identifying itself with any party or any particular sentiment. Operating throughout the 1870s as the only newspaper in the small town on Monterey Bay,[42] the *Argus* claimed it would

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36. Orsi, "Selling the Golden State," 44.
37. Ibid., 84.
38. Nadeau, *Los Angeles: From Mission to Modern City,* 70.
39. According to Richard Orsi, boosterism involved a day-to-day effort on the part of many newspapers "which naturally tried to attract attention and contribute to the economic and social maturation of their infant communities" ("Selling of the Golden State," 478-9). Orsi notes that along with the day-to-day propaganda, many newspapers published annual promotional issues and pamphlets that were distributed as widely as possible in libraries, reading rooms, hotels, colleges, and chambers of commerce throughout the country.
40. Once papers falling into the three categories were identified, using Rowell data, attempts were made to locate microfilm copies of these papers. All available newspapers — twenty-four — were studied.
41. See the *San Francisco Alta California,* 4 January 1849, 3. For a similar early stand on boosterism and political independence, see the *Sacramento Transcript,* 1 April 1850, 2. As late as 1850 fewer than 5 percent of all newspapers in American were listed in the Census as independent or neutral. *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850* (Washington: Robert Armstrong Publisher, 1853), lxv.
42. As late as 1892, Castroville's population was fewer than 1,000. See August Fink, *Monterey County: The Dramatic Story of its Past* (Fresno: Valley Publishers, 1978).

not "attempt to dabble in politics."[43] The *Argus* expressed the belief that politics were not nearly as important as progress, saying that its goal would be to "harmonize political opinion, allay partizan feeling and prejudice," and that it would strive to "cooperate with the community at large without reference to political tenets or opinions." Most importantly, the *Argus* expressed its belief in the pursuit of growth "by placing our respective shoulders to the great wheel of progress and improvement, and with our united efforts try to keep it moving onward in the right direction."[44]

California in the 1870s was, with the exception of San Francisco, a state composed of small towns. Most of the booster and independent rhetoric came from newspapers in these smaller towns, and the call for independence did not come only from newspapers that were avowedly so. The *Watsonville Pajaronian,* the official paper of Santa Cruz County, was founded in 1868 as a loyal Republican paper.[45] But in a February 1871 editorial titled "Independence," the *Pajaronian* editor explained the need for more papers like Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune.*

> The press in this age has an immense influence, for good or bad, and those who control the press — this lever that moves the world — should be men who love God and their Country, firm in ideas of right, INDEPENDENT of cliques and schemers, but all the time true to the people whose interests they represent to a more or less degree. In these days of political and financial corruption, a journalist to be of use to the world and true to himself, must be independent, but independence does not and never has meant neutrality.[46]

Much as was the case with many eastern papers at this time, political independence to this editor suggested the ability to maintain connections with political parties while, at the same time, being free to criticize them.

The *Salinas City Salinas Standard* expressed its intentions to avoid politics in favor of advocating the general development of the community.[47] Founded in 1869 as an independent newspaper in a town previously dominated by Democratic journalism, the *Standard* opted to leave politics to "those who make a living in the filthy pool." Saying that it believed that enough people

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43. *Castroville Argus,* 27 March 1869, 3. For a similar assertion see the *Healdsburg Russian River Flag,* 19 November 1868, 3.
44. *Castroville Argus,* 27 March 1869, 3.
45. According to *Rowell's Directory* , the *Pajaronian* had no competition until the *Watsonville Transcript* was established as a democratic paper in 1876. It then was listed as independent after 1878. In February of 1872, the *Pajaronian* underscored the fact that boosterism was an editorial stance, not just a hobby or fascination. *Watsonville Pajaronian,* 29 February 1872, 3.
46. *Watsonville Pajaronian,* 9 February 1871, 3.
47. The *Salinas Standard* had to compete directly with the *Salinas City Monterey Democrat.* In 1872 the county seat was moved from Monterey to Salinas.

were already engaged in the "laudable work of saving the whole country," the paper said it would be content to do its "level best to preserve and improve a very small portion of it." The *Standard* declared that it would be "devoted to the material development and progress of the county at large, and the valley and city of Salinas especially."[48]

The *Quincy Plumas National* was established as a Republican journal in 1863, but by the early 1870s it had declared its independence. By that time the *National* had no competition in the tiny county seat located 250 miles northeast of San Francisco. In an editorial titled "Independent — The National," its editor expressed the notion that becoming independent gave the newspaper a chance to connect itself with the general interests of the county rather than with the divisive interests of party politics, though it reserved the right to present all sides of any political discussion:

> Our columns will be more exclusively devoted to local interests, and the development of our peculiar resources as a county and State; but we do not intend to debar political subjects from our columns, and shall, under certain restrictions, give all parties a show.[49]

Founded as an independent paper in 1877 in the town of Calistoga (located sixty-seven miles north of San Francisco), the *Independent Calistogian,* as the only locally printed paper, was clear about its intentions to operate outside the realm of party politics. With silver mines, medicinal springs, and grape growing in the vicinity, it promised to operate in the interests of its community, "endeavoring to encourage everything of public and private utility and progress, either in the professional, mercantile or social circle."[50] Similar to the *Independent Calistogian,* the *Ferndale Enterprise* claimed it would be "especially devoted to the interests of Humboldt County and the Pacific Coast general." Listed in Rowell's directory without any political affiliation, the *Enterprise* expressed its sense of duty to the public in that it would be "Independent in

48. *Salinas Standard,* 11 December 1869, 3. For similar positions on local development see also the *Lower Lake Bulletin,* 21 August 1869, 3, and the *San Jose Daily Independent,* 17 May 1870, 2.

49. *Quincy Plumas National,* 2 July 1870, 4. On 19 March 1877, the *Berkeley Advocate,* another newspaper founded with no overt political affiliation, voiced a similar desire to focus itself on the advocacy of community interests: "As the name of the paper indicates, we will be the ADVOCATES of BERKELEY and its vicinity, 'knowing no east, no west, no north, no south,' — each will receive our fostering care."

50. *Independent Calistogian,* 26 December 1877, 3. For more on early Calistoga, see Kay Archuleta, *The Brannan Saga* (San Jose: South McKay Printing, Co., 1977).

politics," and that it would be independent of party and "fearlessly advocate any and all measures for the public good."[51]

Implicit in the idea of independence and in the philosophy of boosterism that was expressed by so many newspapers in the early years of California journalism was the notion of duty — duty to the public at large. Many California newspapers did not portray their political independence and advocacy of community interests only as practical goals, they also depicted them as obligations to the public, requirements for the fulfillment of a higher purpose embodied in the endeavor of journalism.

For example, the *Quincy Plumas National* stated its perception of what the duty a newspaper really was:

> We shall endeavor faithfully to represent the interests and wishes of the people of the whole County. We shall not advocate the cause of any particular section or sections against any other; but shall endeavor to promote harmony, and advance the welfare of all.[52]

The *National* asserted that, just as partisanship required a loyalty to the principles of a political party, independence in a newspaper required an awareness of "public" sentiment and a devotion to the interests of everyone, not just a "particular section" of the community.

The *Visalia Tulare County Times* operated as a Democratic newspaper for eight years in a county and state known for its Democratic leanings. The *Times* temporarily defected to the independent ranks in 1874-75, realizing that such a shift not only required explanation, but also contained "responsibilities."[53] The *Times* summarized these responsibilities saying that it would aspire to be "a true exponent of the people's interest, regardless of politics; working for the good of all. We shall, so far as it is in our power, throw off every thing that tends to bind down a few people."[54]

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51. *Ferndale Enterprise,* 11 May 1878, 3. The *Enterprise* was the only newspaper published in Ferndale at this time. Situated just south of Eureka, Ferndale served as a center for farming, dairy production, and redwood lumber transport.
52. *Quincy Plumas National,* 11 August 1866, 3.
53. *Visalia Tulare County Times,* 3 January 1874, 3. The *Times* competed throughout the decade with the independent *Visalia Delta.* Visalia was the oldest community between Stockton and Los Angeles. According to Annie R. Mitchell, *The Way it Was: The Colorful History of Tulare County* (Fresno: Valley Publishers, 1976), Tulare county was predominantly pro-Confederacy during the Civil War. Later, much of the county's early politics revolved around land usage.
54. *Visalia Tulare County Times,* 3 January 1874, 3. For more rhetoric concerning such altruistic motives see the *Alameda Argus,* 11 November 1878, 3, and the *Independent Calistogian,* 26 December 1877, 3.

The *Truckee Republican,* founded in 1872 as a Republican paper in this Nevada County mountain town, de-emphasized politics and stressed its intent to devote most of its efforts toward boosterism.[55]

> Our efforts will be mainly devoted to writing up and publishing matters of local interest, believing by that course we can accomplish the most good. We mean by the term "local" not merely the events transpiring in this locality, but everything that will give people on the outside an idea of the natural resources of Truckee, and the country adjacent thereto. It is to make public such matters of interest that we shall principally labor.[56]

In December of 1875, the *Republican* came under the direction of a new editor, W. F. Preston, who pledged to run the paper "in the interest of no person or clique," concluding "[t]he welfare of Truckee is the only influence which I shall recognize in my shaping of local and editorial matter."[57] Regardless of party loyalty, the editor of the *Republican* claimed to encourage legislative initiatives that would improve its home.

> In the immediate future there is work to do. Measures will come before the present Legislature, that will have a tendency to improve our town, if passed. Already bills are drafted that are full of local importance. . . Our aim shall be to make the new volume a record of the wishes and plans, an exponent of the views and sentiments of the community.[58]

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55. Gold was discovered early in this region. From the early 1850s on, Nevada County was the most important mining county in the state. For another newspaper that switched from Republican to independent during this period see the *Nevada City Daily Transcript,* founded in 1860 as a Republican paper but disavowing party ties by 1874. The *Daily Transcript* wrote often about its efforts to develop the mining interest in the area. See *Nevada City Daily Transcript,* 6 September 1866, 3, and 6 March 1872, 3, for examples.

56. *Truckee Republican,* 30 April 1872, 3. For another newspaper claiming its primary focus to be booster in nature, see the *Dutch Flat Forum.* When the *Forum* changed hands in September of 1876, the new editors, Mcintosh and Winders, reflected on the intended purpose of the paper, writing "The FORUM was established less than one year ago, neither as a political or religious journal, but solely as a local family newspaper, more intent upon advancing the prosperity and material welfare of one of the most extensive mining and lumbering regions, and most prosperous mining communities of the State." See also the *Forum* of 11 October 1877, 3.

57. *Truckee Republican,* 4 December 1875. In the 11 December issue, the new editor claimed: "To please the business men of Truckee, by advocating measures that tend to benefit the community, and by denouncing all that is antagonistic to Truckee's good, will be my endeavor."

58. *Truckee Republican,* 9 December 1875, 3.

Located in the county seat, the *Lakeport Lake County Bee* (also known as the *Cloverdale*) was also explicit about its booster duties, claiming in its first issue that the paper would be devoted to the interests of the Cloverdale and Lake County, and that it would "faithfully make known the varied resources and brilliant future prospects of both.[59] The editor claimed independence, not political partisanship, would best suit the *Bee's* intentions to boost the interests of the area. Claiming in 1874 that the paper was established with the purpose of "developing our resources and encourage emigration,"[60] the *Bee* often published stories that described the economic outlook in the area near Clear Lake (120 miles north of San Francisco), usually, of course, stressing the positive aspects.[61]

The Los Angeles Herald, founded as a Democratic paper in 1872 but turned independent by 1873, sought to promote the boom that was gripping the community of Los Angeles in the early 1870s. As an independent paper full of real estate and commercial news, the *Herald* printed much booster material, including stories such as "How to Encourage Immigration."[62] Talking about the partisanship of some San Francisco papers and the fact that they ignore the rest of the state, the *Herald* said:

> If those journals would lay aside their envious bickerings, cease dishing up scandal, devote less attention to getting up mining stock excitements, and apply more time to writing true descriptions of the vast and varied resources of the State, they would do something in earnest toward spreading information that would induce the coming here of thousands of laboring men and women — just what the country needs to make it the richest, best, and most beautiful place in the world.[63]

Early in the spring of 1875 the *Herald* appealed to political principles beyond the limits of party, claiming that its primary goal was "to assist in the development of the vast resource of this part of the State by placing in the hands of the public unexaggerated descriptions of the soil and its products, together with such other information as would induce immigration."[64]

The *Gilroy Advocate* serves as a prime example of a newspaper's journey from partisan to independent booster. The *Advocate* was founded as a Republican paper in 1868, the same year Gilroy secured an extension of the Southern Pacific Railroad south from San Jose. Gilroy, a fruit and stock raising

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59. *Lakeport Lake County Bee,* 29 June 1872, 3.
60. *Cloverdale Bee,* 14 June 1874, 3.
61. For example, see the *Cloverdale Bee,* "Lake County: Its Progress in the Year 1876," 4 January 1877, 3.
62. *Los Angeles Herald, 10* March 1875, 3. The newspaper also printed promotional pamphlets on the Los Angeles area in February of 1875. See also the *Herald* of 1 January 1874, 3, and 4 January 1876, 3.
63. *Los Angeles Herald,* 10 March 1875, 3.
64. *Los Angeles Herald,* 27 March 1875, 3.

community eighty miles south of San Francisco, was incorporated as a town in 1870.[65] In its introductory issue the *Advocate* stated its intention to boost the surrounding area.[66] The *Advocate* came out clearly for the Republican party in the newspaper's early years, all the while running regular stories on "Improvements in Gilroy," which described construction and development in the area. In the paper's second issue, the editor of the *Advocate* reiterated the cause for community development and went so far as to tie the prospects for development to the paper's efforts.[67]

The *Advocate* continued its political endorsement of General Grant through the 1868 campaign, claiming that "after [the election] our paramount object will be the local interests of the county."[68] A few weeks later the *Advocate* outlined its position: now that the election was over, boosting Gilroy was more important than party politics.[69]

After changing hands twice by February of 1870, the *Advocate* explained its booster position once again, this time leaning more toward a politically independent position:

> We will devote our time and space to the interests and prosperity of our county, and the smiling fertile valley of Santa Clara generally, . . . believing our broad valley and fertile fields, with their agricultural wealth, are more important to the real interests of the county and citizens generally, than the hackneyed denunciation, or stale disapprobation of the partisan.[70]

By July of 1870, the *Advocate* came under new ownership again, this time the new editors came out clearly on the side of "Independent Politics," aiming to provide "a cool, dispassionate survey of both sides" because "[t]his independence of thought and action is the great purifier to which we must look

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65. See *Gilroy's First Century of Incorporation, 1870-1970* (Gilroy: Gilroy Historical Society and the City of Gilroy, 1970); and E.S. Harrison, *Gilroy, The Most Favored Section of Santa Clara Valley* (Gilroy: Gilroy Board of Trade, 1888).
66. *Gilroy Advocate,* 12 September 1868, 3.
67. *Gilroy Advocate,* 19 September 1868, 3.
68. *Gilroy Advocate,* 17 October 1868, 3. With Grant's victory, the *Advocate* printed an obituary for the Democratic Party, 7 November 1868, 2.
69. *Gilroy Advocate,* 14 November 1868, 3. "In doing this it certainly becomes our duty to work for the interest of all, regardless of any party considerations." In its very next issue, the *Advocate* published an article titled "Our Town," which went to great lengths to describe all that was well and good about Gilroy — the climate, the industriousness of the community, the permanence of its buildings, etc. (*Gilroy Advocate,* 21 November 1868, 3). Over the next several years, the *Advocate* constantly described physical improvements and business transactions in the town.
70. *Gilroy Advocate,* 5 February 1870, 3. Two weeks later the *Advocate* claimed that Gilroy's population had quadrupled in less than twelve months, and that "Gilroy is destined ere long to be the queen city of the great Santa Clara valley." (*Gilroy Advocate,* 19 February 1870, 3.)

for needed reforms."[71] By this time, partisan editorials in the *Advocate* were now all but absent — stories about Gilroy and its advantages, international news, and local intelligence were common. But the *Advocate* did not just claim to be the ally of Gilroy and its development, the paper also claimed to be integrally responsible for the town's growth. On its third anniversary, the *Advocate* claimed to have "tenderly nurtured" Gilroy's infancy, guarding it "with anxious solicitude," beholding with "guardian pride, its rapid strides to a prosperous and thriving manhood."[72]

Throughout the 1870s the *Advocate* claimed political independence, all the while affirming its intent to represent the interests of the town and its development. Though it changed owners several times during this period, each editor espoused much the same philosophy.[73] On 7 September 1872, the retiring editor reflected "it has been our highest aims, as we considered it our imperative duty, to give our readers the choicest and most interesting matter of which our poor ability is capable, and to advocate and discuss every enterprise that tended to enhance the prosperity, growth and development of our city and valley generally." By the 1880s Gilroy was the second largest city in the county.

Conclusions

Most obviously, the rhetorical stances of independence and boosterism were aimed at expanding the readership of the newspaper; a party-loyalist approach would have unnecessarily limited possibilities for the commercial growth. Perhaps the editor of the *Lakeport Lake County Bee* said it best:

> [O]ur judgment and experience tell us that nonpartisan papers are the most useful and advantageous in small communities, and that political organs represent only the views of a portion

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71. *Gilroy Advocate, 10* September 1870, 3. Three weeks later the new editors published "Gilroy Statistics," which was to be printed in the *Advertising Guide* by newspaper agent L.P. Fisher of San Francisco, describing enterprises in the town. (see *Gilroy Advocate,* 23 July 1870, 3.)

72. *Gilroy Advocate,* 10 September 1870, 3. Yet some saw the prosperity flowing both ways. The *Anaheim Gazette,* which operated in a town without party-affiliated papers — the Southern *Californian* and the *Review* were also independent — explained its financial success as a function of its booster efforts. "We certainly know that our endeavors to promote the interests of this county, and our honest desire to do those things which we believed it to be our duty to do, has made us a legion of friends whose well-wishes we hope to retain for all time to come." For similar assertions, see also the *Anaheim Gazette,* 23 October 1873, 3; and the *Nevada City Nevada Daily Transcript,* 22 January 1867, 3.

73. See the *Gilroy Advocate,* 1 October 1870, 3, 9 September 1871, 3, 25 January 1873, 3 and 6 September 1873, 3, when the paper again claimed credit for the development of the town.

> of the people, and from them alone can expect cordial support.[74]

Specifically, the rhetoric of boosterism rationalized the lack of a newspaper's party involvement as a prerequisite to serving the interests (especially the economic interests) of the entire community. Boosterism was not presented as antithetical to partisanship; it was simply seen by many as a *superior* form of public service. Social historian Michael Schudson has suggested that the rise of the penny press in the 1830s signaled the end of political journalism and the rise of a new antipolitical, more economic role for America's newspapers.[75] As true as this may be, the transition away from political affiliation toward independence was a slow one, a movement that required development and articulation of a new operating ideology.[76] The rhetoric of boosterism in California was one such new operating ideology — it gave newspapers a way to persuade the public to embrace newspapers on a much broader social and economic basis than previous partisan models had allowed.

As Doyle foreshadows in his research on Illinois frontier communities during the middle of the nineteenth century, much of the rhetoric in western newspapers at this time suggests a connection between the goals of political independence and the fundamentals of boosterism. The tenets of political independence served to broaden a newspaper's audience and therefore expand its social impact and improve its economic viability. Such was also the case with newspapers' role in boosterism. Many publishers argued vehemently that people had an obligation to support their newspaper because it provided the means to improve the lives of everyone in the town, a noticeable departure for those who had made a living out of party loyalty.[77] In publishing stories about the prosperity and potential of a region, encouraging immigration, and directly sponsoring community development, newspapers aimed to fulfill their half of the bargain, promoting growth and stability, which were perceived to be mutual goals of all involved. Such a relationship was conceived to be symbiotic, with newspapers providing the means for their communities to grow and flourish, and with subscribers providing the same for the newspapers. Many California editors and publishers elevated boosterism from community activity to editorial

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74. *Lakeport Lake County Bee,* 29 June 1872, 3.
75. See Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News* (New York: Basic Books, 1978).
76. See Rutenbeck, "Toward a History of the Ideologies of Partisanship and Independence in American Journalism." During the latter half of the nineteenth century, American newspapers were prone to be self-reflective. Lacking the institutional mechanisms that would articulate their *raison d'être* (e.g., newspaper associations and other professional organizations), newspapers undertook for themselves to describe rhetorically what they perceived their role in society to be.
77. Cloud, *The Business of Newspapers on the Western Frontier,* 35. Halaas claims of Rocky Mountain mining camps, "Among those most interested in the permanency of the community were frontier editors. Like shopkeepers, supply dealers, and other businessmen, their livelihood depended upon the vitality of the camp and its promise for future development." (*Boom Town Newspapers,* 8.)

manifesto. It was this editorial stance — the wholehearted promotion of local interests — that provided the crucial stepping stone toward the emerging independent, economic-oriented role of the California press. By claiming to represent the interests of the entire community, booster newspapers were cultivating as much economic and political support as possible; obtaining a wider audience was an economic necessity for newspapers by the 1870s, unlike the politically and economically elite newspapers of the first half of the century.

Politically, newspapers were hoping to exercise more self determination, without following the dictates of a particular party or group. Economically, newspapers were beginning to focus their editorial efforts on a wider audience, seeking to capitalize on local prosperity, increasing circulation, and advertising revenues as sources for profit.[78] Socially, newspapers sought to extol the virtues of their own communities and take an active role in further development. The booster role provided an early glimpse of the emerging social responsibility that newspapers used to divorce themselves from the inherent limits of politics and wed themselves to the cultural and economic potential of their region.

Within its first thirty years of statehood California already ranked among the top ten most urban states in the country,[79] and it led the nation's way in the establishment of the corporate economy after the Civil War.[80] Newspapers in California reflected this prioritization of economic growth above and beyond the limitations of party loyalty. Perhaps more clearly and with more commitment than their eastern contemporaries, the early California press offers a historical base from which to examine the expanded, nonpartisan political role that newspapers have come to be known for in this country — a role that continues to be directed by economic imperatives and increasingly amorphous political agendas.

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78. Baldasty, *The Commercialization of News in Nineteenth Century America,* 139-143.
79. Williams, *The Democratic Party and California Politics,* 2.
80. Olin, *California Politics, 1846-1920: The Emerging Corporate State,* 27.

Research Essay

In Defense of Historiographic Parochialism

By Ralph Frasca

In its quest for comprehensiveness, "synthesis" historiography often succumbs to superficiality and excessive generalization, the author states. Responding to academic calls for synthesis, he proposes that research and writing on "parochial," or narrowly focused, historical subjects often encourage scholarly rigor and provide pragmatic benefits.

One of the most hotly debated topics in historical scholarship is the importance of synthesis versus the parochial nature of most historiography. There isn't much of a debate, though — the advocates of synthesis have written many essays decrying its absence, while the proponents of parochialism keep producing journal articles and convention papers on narrowly focused subjects. The synthesis-versus-parochialism question has been raised again recently in several forums. In a 1995 special issue on World History, Philip Pomper wrote in *History and Theory* that "history should be written from the broadest possible perspective." He applauded those who undertake the "task of grand synthesis," and suggested that those who do not are "at the lower end of a scale of intellectual creativity."[1]

Likewise, the *Journal of American History* devoted a recent issue to "The Practice of American History," revealing that "narrowness" of scholarship was identified by the plurality of United States historians surveyed as "the greatest weakness of the practice of American history."[2] This prompted Thomas

1. Philip Pomper, "World History and Its Critics," *History and Theory* 34, no. 6 (1995): 1-2.
2. David Thelen, "The Practice of American History," *Journal of American History* 81 (December 1994): 936.

Bender to write that the historical community needs "a synthetic sensibility" which offers "reconnection of the study of politics and culture."[3]

Bender has issued the most intellectual and persuasive calls for synthesis in recent years.[4] Critiquing much of the American historical scholarship since the 1960s, Bender wrote that social historiography

> is devoted almost exclusively to the private or *gemeinschaftlich* world of trades, occupations, and professions; locality; sisterhood, race, and ethnicity; and family. What we have gotten are the parts, richly described. But since they are somehow assumed to be autonomous, we get no image of the whole, and no suggestions about how the parts might go together or even whether they are intended to go together."[5]

As Bender viewed the problem, the thirst for "newness" in American culture has pervaded historical scholarship and manifested itself in the prevalence of fragmentary historical works. Bender complained that these "parts" do not significantly benefit the "need to narrate our history as a whole," the ultimate goal of which is "the making of public culture." This, Bender suggested, is the historians' foremost duty.[6]

The "public culture" concept is at the nexus of Bender's remedy for the monographic woes plaguing historiography. He challenged historians to adopt "an architectonic vision" of American history and to use their scholarly artillery to advance competing explications of the formation and development of American culture. To accomplish this synthesis, Bender advocated that "the nation" should be understood as "the ever changing, always contingent outcome of a continuing contest among social groups and ideas for the power to define public culture, thus the nation itself." In short, Bender would have historians be as roiling as his own concept of "nation."[7]

This debate about synthesis versus parochialism in the field of history is neither new nor resolved. Others have decried the trend toward parochial scholarship, both within the field of American history[8] and in specialized fields,

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3. Thomas Bender, " 'Venturesome and Cautious': American History in the 1990s," *Journal of American History* 81 (December 1994): 995.

4. See, e.g., Thomas Bender, "The New History — Then and Now," *Reviews in American History* 12 (December 1984): 612-22; Thomas Bender, "Making History Whole Again," *New York Times Book Review,* 6 October 1985, 1, 42-43; Thomas Bender, "Wholes and Parts: The Need for Synthesis in American History," *Journal of American History* 73 (June 1986): 120-36; Thomas Bender, "Wholes and Parts: Continuing the Conversation," *Journal of American History* 74 (June 1987): 123-30.

5. Bender, "Wholes and Parts: The Need for Synthesis," 122.

6. Ibid., 127.

7. Ibid., 122, 126-27.

8. In addition to Bender, synthesis advocates among American historians include Bernard Bailyn, "The Challenge of Modern Historiography," *American Historical Review* 87 (February 1982): 1-24; Eric Foner, "History in Crisis," *Commonweal,* 18 December 1981, 723-26; Carol Ginzburg, "A Comment," in *The New History: The*

such as journalism history.[9] However, these pleas have had little apparent effect. While the Pulitzer prizes continue to be awarded to authors of sweeping syntheses, many historians doggedly pursue narrowly focused history. This essay will consider three related prudential factors encouraging this trend and argue, contrary to Bender and other advocates of synthesis, that not only does parochialism *not* represent a canker on Clio, but is in fact desirable and welcome.

For the most part, historians do not think in a vacuum, selecting and pursuing lines of scholarly inquiry according to which subjects they view as most in need of study or which will be the most comprehensive. Regrettably, professional factors insinuate themselves into scholars' minds and bid them follow certain paths while avoiding others. Such preclusive factors may include the availability of funding and the political or ideological orientation of one's employer or sponsor.

This subtle form of intellectual restraint seems intrinsic to academia, where such pragmatic forces as the tenure system and merit-pay raises are at work on junior faculty. In order to secure tenure, faculty members at most colleges and universities must engage in scholarly productivity; as a general rule, this is in proportion to the institution's mission (teaching versus research) and its faculty's teaching load. Especially for junior faculty at large public institutions, authoring books and journal articles and presenting convention papers has traditionally been integral in establishing scholarly credentials. Such writings have been called "the currency of the field." In other words, one's standing in the scholarly community, and how much prestige (and often as a result, money) one can bring to a university, is considerably more dependent on publishing in "major" journals than in one's ability to stimulate interest in the economic woes of the frontier press among a roomful of nineteen-year-olds on a wintry day.

Acutely aware of this pressure, which seems to increase with each passing year, many junior faculty scramble to mint the most scholarly currency

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1980s and Beyond, ed. Theodore K. Rabb and Robert I. Rotberg (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 278; Herbert G. Gutman, "The Missing Synthesis: Whatever Happened to History?" *Nation,* 21 November 1981, 521, 553-54; Alice Kessler-Harris, "Social History," in *The New American History,* ed. Eric Foner (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 177-80; Michael Zuckerman, "Myth and Method: The Current Crisis in American Historical Writing," *History Teacher* 17 (February 1984): 219-45.

For rare opposing views, see Eric H. Monkkenen, "The Dangers of Synthesis," *American Historical Review* 91 (December 1986): 1145-57; Nell Irvin Painter, "Bias and Synthesis in History," *Journal of American History* 74 (June 1987): 109-12.

9. For synthesis advocacy among journalism historians, see James W. Carey, "The Problem of Journalism History," *Journalism History* 1 (spring 1974): 3-5, 27; Garth S. Jowett, "Communications in History: An Initial Theoretical Approach," *The Canadian Journal of Information Science* 1 (May 1976): 5-13; Joseph P. McKerns, "The Limits of Progressive Journalism History," *Journalism History* 4 (autumn 1978): 88-92.

in their five or six years before facing a tenure vote. Obviously, the more narrowly focused the topic, the quicker and more frequently one can produce — all the better to satisfy article-counting deans. Suffice it to say that a journal article on how Southern newspapers reported the Battle of Shiloh can be crafted more expeditiously than a treatise on the root causes of the American Civil War.

The second prudential factor is that such an article is also more likely to be accepted in most history journals. The very existence of publication outlets for historiography seems to encourage parochial inquiry. Journals tend to embrace certain page lengths for articles, with twenty to twenty-five double-spaced pages the most frequently preferred length.[10] Although intended to benefit the publication's readership, these length guidelines in many cases preclude publication of impressive syntheses. Tightly packaged articles which make one or two main points about a fragment of social history abound in journal pages. Any attempt to fashion a theory of Bender's "public culture" would likely result in either an article too long for publication or a superficial treatment. Also, the increasing specialization of journals themselves, organized mostly around themes or geographic regions, further serves to discourage expansive attempts at integration.

The third prudential factor also involves specialization. It is a professional expectation that junior faculty members will become experts in one or several narrow areas. This lends legitimacy and focus to their scholarly pursuits and allows the academic community to categorize them, as in "he's a colonial press historian" or "she's a revisionist labor historian." In many sectors, calling someone a "generalist" carries a mildly derogatory tone, implying that the individual hasn't the capability or interest to develop a specialty.

The specialization inclination is inculcated into junior faculty members while they are in graduate school, where they are expected to align themselves with established scholars and carve a research area off those professors' areas of expertise. This area often leads to a Ph.D. dissertation and becomes the junior faculty members' own research area, parts of which they in turn dutifully share with their protégés. All the while, the scope of inquiry becomes narrower and more parochial.

This process of carving off tasty research morsels augments the bewailed historiographic fragmentation and points to the real prospect that in several decades, myopic historians will be pedantically combing history's scrap heap for publishable minutia.

This leads us to the central question — are the "intensely parochial, nearly hermetic discourses around a series of social units far smaller than either societies or nations" that worried Bender having a deleterious effect on the study of American history?[11] I think not. Bender's call for a historiographic reconceptualization based on the imperative of "offering our interpretations of how our society and nation works" challenges historians to pursue a holy grail

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10. For example, *American Journalism's* maximum is twenty-five pages, while *Journalism History* prefers a limit of twenty. Desired lengths in most American history journals are comparable.

11. Bender, "Wholes and Parts: The Need for Synthesis," 135-36.

too amorphous to yield anything other than epic tomes which attempt to explain enormous historical concepts without much detail.

The first six decades of this century have witnessed the publication of many such sweeping treatises, ranging from the Beards' *The Rise of American Civilization* to Andrews's *The Colonial Background of the American Revolution* to Boorstin's *The Americans: The Colonial Experience.* Other notables include Miller's *Errand Into the Wilderness,* Beard's *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* and Nettels's *The Roots of American Civilization.*[12]

These authors intended, using the words of one, "to understand and to describe the essentials of American society as they have appeared in the course of its development."[13] Few would deny they have done so, but they have sacrificed much in the process. By undertaking such formidable tasks, these historians have managed to cover the waterfront, but have done so from miles high. While they offer a comprehensive picture, it is indistinct and blurry. What they achieve in breadth they naturally lose in depth.

When scholars sacrifice depth, they resort to sweeping and sometimes questionable generalizations which provide ammunition for critics and serve as "straw men" which specialists gleefully demolish. An example of such interpretive flights of fancy may be found in the Beards' and Boorstin's descriptions of eighteenth-century press practices. The Beards have claimed that the colonial press was "wider and freer than the pulpit and the classroom" and "Was an art open to any person, group, faction, or party that could buy a press and exercise enough literary skill to evade the heavy hand of colonial authorities." However, it has been argued that this misleading view of colonial printing sought more to glorify the early press as a "heroic" institution in imagined halcyon days than to study its realities.[14]

Boorstin fell into the same trap. Noting the success of the press by the mid-eighteenth century, Boorstin maintained that colonies owed the establishment of their earliest presses to government subsidy. "In the earliest years the bulk of what was issued from the presses was government work: statutes and the votes and proceedings of colonial assemblies," he wrote. According to Boorstin, "the colonial press could hardly be a nursery of novel,

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12. Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization* 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1931); Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Background of the American Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1924); Daniel M. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Colonial Experience* (New York: Random House, 1958); Perry Miller, *Errand Into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1964); Charles A. Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1913); Curtis P. Nettels, *The Roots of American Civilization* (New York: F.S. Crofts, 1940).

13. Nettels, *The Roots of American Civilization,* xi.

14. Beard and Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization,* 1: 185, 187; Ralph Frasca, "Benjamin Franklin's Printing Network," *American Journalism* 5 (1988): 145-58.

startling, or radical ideas. The printer had to be a 'government man,' acceptable to the ruling group in his colony."[15]

By asserting that the freedom and economic standing of printers depended on staying in the good graces of the colonial governments so as to secure government printing contracts, Boorstin opened himself up for criticism from scholars who formulated careful arguments which disagreed with both his specific assertion (the source of printers' revenue), and the general assertion (that printers were forced to act as meek government puppets).[16] If government printing contracts influenced conduct so effectively, why did printers repeatedly and successfully flout sedition laws and criticize government with very few reprisals, which were generally mild?

Narrowly focused articles, written by specialists in the particular area, encourage scholarly rigor. While imperial, revisionist, or synthesizing histories may be highly interpretive (a useful ingredient missing in some parochial historiography), they often lapse into flights of intellectual fancy without any citations to support their sometimes questionable assertions.

Bender's allegation that "Recent scholarship, with its intense specialization, fragmentation, and preoccupation with groups, has not been entering general intellectual or political discourse the way it did during Beard's and Hofstadter's generations" is plausible, but this is more to recent scholarship's credit than its debit.[17] The fragmentary nature of recent work may peeve some who seek one source to answer myriad questions, but those historians accustomed to piecing together shards of evidence to form a pattern commonly use narrowly focused articles and books in the same way that they use scattered primary sources to form a wholistic reality. Certainly it takes extra time and effort, but it is a safe bet that most historians would rather read multiple discrete articles to understand life in colonial Philadelphia than one article which skims the surface of the topic's many facets.

In short, parochial articles are, and should be, used in the same manner as fragmented evidence — the larger the concept one wishes to understand, the more fragments must be examined.

One of the more recent trends in topic-oriented social history has been the ethnographic study of individual colonial towns.[18] One such historian,

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15. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Colonial Experience,* 324-40 (quotes from 325, 335).

16. Frasca, "Benjamin Franklin's Printing Network;" Jeffery A. Smith, *Printers and Press Freedom: The Ideology of Early American Journalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Mary Ann Yodelis, "Who Paid the Piper?: Publishing Economics in Boston, 1763-1775," *Journalism Monographs* 38 (February 1975): 1-2.

17. Bender, "Wholes and Parts: The Need for Synthesis," 136.

18. Richard Bushman, *Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967); Kenneth A. Lockridge, *A New England Town: The First Hundred Years* (New York: Norton, 1970); Darrett B. Rutman and Anita H. Rutman, *A Place in Time: Middlesex County, Virginia, 1650-1750* (New York: Norton, 1984); John J. Waters, "Patrimony,

Kenneth Lockridge, summarized the problem faced by these ethnohistorians: "The student of the New England Town faces a difficult choice: he can either deal with many towns, asking few or shallow questions, or he can deal thoroughly with a single town, running the risk of describing an untypical example."[19]

This hearkens to the central concern of parochial scholarship — how much external validity does it have? This is an essential question historians must ask themselves as they prepare articles or books on selected slices of the American past. For, if an article on John Dickinson's "Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania" did not put the political polemics into a larger historical context, the subject would be stripped of its meaning and its impact on the Revolutionary generation.

The attacks on parochial historiography call for historians to forsake the current trend of scholarship in favor of an ambiguous yet supposedly noble quest — the sweeping articulation of the forces which have coalesced to create our "public culture," as Bender put it. No such diversion from the present path is needed, nor would it be helpful to historians, given the professional realities with which they must contend. Additionally, returning to the expansive historical interpretations replete more than a quarter-century ago would broaden focus at the excessively high cost of meticulous intellectual rigor.

Clio would be better served today by historians who polished their internal validity to a high gloss and made maximum effort to demonstrate a link between their narrowly focused topic and a broad historical concept. Some of the works which made the greatest contribution to the field were crafted by writers who found significance in small subjects. In general, the various fragments of history now being published in books and journal articles are a more valuable contribution to American history than the vast syntheses of bygone days.

The author is an associate professor in the School of Communication, Hofstra University.

Succession, and Social Stability: Guilford, Connecticut, in the Eighteenth Century," *Perspectives in American History* 10 (1976); Michael Zuckerman, *Peaceable Kingdoms: New England Towns in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1970).

19. Lockridge, *A New England Town,* xiii.

American Journalism Historians Association

CALL FOR PAPERS

Annual Convention: October 16-18, 1997, Mobile, Ala.

The AJHA invites paper entries, panel proposals, and abstracts of work in progress on any facet of media history, including electronic media and film, advertising, and public relations. Among topic areas in which papers are invited is Southern Journalism. Because the AJHA aims to present original material at its conventions, research papers and panels submitted to the convention should not have been submitted to or accepted by another local, regional, or national conference, convention, or publication.

Research entries should be completed papers not exceeding twenty-five typewritten double-spaced pages, including references. Although use of the Chicago Manual of Style is recommended, it is not required. Four copies of each paper should be submitted as well as a stamped, self-addressed postcard for notification of receipt. Each paper should include a cover sheet indicating the paper's title, the author's name and address, and the author's institutional affiliation as well as the author's position at that institution, and four single-page abstracts. Only the title should appear on the paper and the abstract; the author's name should appear only on the cover page.

Authors of accepted papers are expected to attend the convention and must register for the convention to present their research. Authors should bring twenty-five copies of their papers to distribute at the conference. Awards for outstanding research include: the Robert Lance Award for the best student paper; the William Snorgrass Award for the best research paper on minority journalism; the Best Research Paper; and awards for the top three research papers.

Panel proposals should include a brief description of the topic, the names of the moderator and participants, and a brief summary of each participant's presentation. The topic of the panels as well as the content of the individual presentations should not have been submitted or presented elsewhere. Panel participants are expected to attend the conference and must register to make their presentations.

Research in progress should be submitted in abstract form (no more than 350 words, two copies) and should focus on significant research under way. Oral presentations of research in progress will be limited to five minutes and will be accompanied by a paper of three to five pages in length (excluding bibliography) for distribution at the meeting.

Send **Research Papers to:**
Prof. Patrick S. Washburn
School of Journalism
Ohio University
Athens, Ohio 45701

Send **Panel Proposals to:**
Prof. Tracy Gottlieb
Department of Communication
Seton Hall University
South Orange, N.J. 07079

Send **Research in Progress** to:
Prof. Eugenia Palmegiano
History Department
St. Peter's College
Jersey City, N.J. 07306

All submissions should be postmarked by May 1, 1997

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David R. Spencer, University of Western Ontario, Editor

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W. Lance Bennett and David L. Paletz, eds., *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1994. 341 pp. Cloth, $40. Paper, $15.95.

Researchers who have honed their skills of perception and interpretation position themselves in a state of readiness when a "case study" arises on the political landscape which could not be produced through any other means. Such was the case in the war between the U.S. and Iraq following the invasion of Kuwait. Observers from myriad backgrounds are brought together to investigate this "case study" to see what, if anything, has been learned from that series of events.

One of the more thought provoking essays comes from the communication-sociological perspective of Todd Gitlin and Daniel Hallin who put the war in a popular culture context. While the public generally has very limited interest in foreign policy, war or the threat of war excites popular interest in an otherwise mundane news item. When people consider that their family members and friends may be flown halfway around the world to participate in resolving an international conflict, suddenly interest is kindled. People back home also experience lifestyle changes as they continually monitor the situation via television and talk regularly of the status of the conflict with their peers.

Constructing images through the use of public relations techniques was another insight provided by the contributors to this book. Since Americans knew very little about Saddam Hussein before his Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait, how was he made to look like a "Hitler?" How did the image makers successfully portray Kuwait as a Western style democracy? The answer is by the use of audience research, including focus groups. Once public relations agencies such as Hill and Knowlton obtained their raw data, they sold their ideas to the media, which accepted it at face value. A few spotty news items scattered here and there mentioned briefly that the Reagan and Bush administrations had been Hussein's supporters in limited partnership before the conflict escalated. An item that never made it to the public agenda was: "Bush considers Hussein a 'Hitler' figure; why did he at one time support him?"

Zaller's analysis on Congress as both leading and following public opinion at the same time accurately points out the complexity of an interconnected, multilayered system. While Democratic leaders were limited in their oppositions to Bush's moves toward intervention and eventually supported the president in the efforts, their reasons for doing so are difficult to ascertain.

Oddly enough, I found the weakest piece to be the opening provocation from Marvin Kalb (formerly with CBS and NBC, now with Harvard). Kalb seems to be very narrow in his plea for open access to media covering a war of this nature. Apparently not much time or thought went into his argument. A much stronger analysis is provided by other writers in this book, such as those contrasting the way the war was portrayed on French TV (i.e., a conflict of ideologies) as opposed to American TV coverage (one country opposed to another). In other words, Kalb's view is restricted to viewing journalism from a limited perspective. Newsworthiness in other nations covering the same event varied as did issues of access to fighting and newsmakers.

Generally speaking *Taken By Storm* contributes to our understanding of a unique situation. Since an unlimited number of variables are open-ended in such a situation, however, so our understanding is restricted. Primarily what we learn from the book is how public images can be formed and disseminated through the media at such times (i.e., Hussein as "Hitler") and how reciprocal political leadership is (such as Congress leading and following at the same time).

William G. Covington, Jr., Bridgewater State College

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John William Cavanaugh, *Media Effects on Voters: A Panel Study of the 1992 Presidential Election.* Lanham Md.: University Press of America, Inc., 1995. 194 pp. Cloth, $39.

In *Media Effects on Voters*, John William Cavanaugh says he is seeking the answer to two key questions. Do attack news items reach all voters regardless of political interest or media access? Does attack journalism affect individual vote choice? After comparing a content analysis of newspaper and television news items with interviews of paneled voters, he concludes that certain attack stories catalyzed the attention of voters regardless of political interest and media access but that attack stories involving character items did not seem to affect the final vote choice evenly across the board. In doing so, Cavanaugh decided that the voters themselves have learned from previous campaigns to disregard sensational tabloid information about the candidates.

The study was conducted in two parts. The first was a microanalysis of mass media effects on a panel of eighteen voters from Columbia, South Carolina, during the 1992 presidential election that revisited the panel study approach by Doris Graber in *Processing the News.* Each panelist was interviewed separately every two weeks during the months of July, August, September, October, and November of 1992. As part of the analysis, these

panelists were divided into four groups, using high interest and easy access as the categories.

The second part of the study was a content analysis of *The State* newspaper of Columbia, South Carolina, and WIS-TV, the local NBC affiliate broadcasting statewide in South Carolina. He also utilized television news abstracts from Vanderbilt University to analyze national news broadcasts during the general election. The more than twenty thousand newspaper and television news items were coded and placed into sixty-four categories.

Included in the book's six chapters were discussions of the voting behavior literature, the presidential selection process, and the mass media and the presidential elections; a chronological overview of the 1992 presidential campaign; an explanation of the research method; a report of the news media content analysis; a recount of the panelist interviews; and a discussion of research implications and suggestions for improving the presidential selection process.

Despite the promise of the foreword which declares that *Media Effects on Voters* is must reading for students of political campaigns and others, this book is an example of an interesting idea badly executed. While the author bears little responsibility for manufacturing defects such as typographical errors and dropped or misplaced pages, the grammatical errors, misuse of pronouns, insistent use of me, my, and I, shifting verb tenses, digressions, misspelled names, and use of buzz words and terms are.

While such flaws are not fatal on their own, they point to an endemic inattention to detail. Besides the manufacturing flaws that render the volume hard to read, *Media Effects on Voters* fails to fulfill the promise of providing a new insight on voter information processing. In illustrating this, three flaws symptomatic of methodological problems quickly come to mind. First, one of the two categories used to divide surveyed voters is illogical. Defining that category, easy access, as "attending to multiple news sources at least three or four times a week" and "claiming to pay attention to news stories about the 1992 election" is a non sequitur. Attending to the media is not the same as access to the media. Second, it is unclear whether the author personally conducted the content analysis, had others execute it, or used a computer. Because of the question of neutrality that arises when interceder reliability is not addressed, the results of his content analysis are doubtful. Lastly, no adequate linkage was developed between the content analyzed attack items in the media and the views of the paneled interviewees. Because of this, the study's conclusions must be regarded as anecdotal rather than grounded in statistics, particularly since time-order was not well established.

Unfortunately, the sum effect of editing and methodological flaws is that *Media Effects on Voters* is not a must for the book shelf. While a well-edited version would have made a fine article, this book is a niche publication, proving longitudinal information about the relationship between the media and voters.

Ginger Carter, Georgia College

Joseph Man Chan and Chin-Chuan Lee, *Mass Media and Political Transition: The Hong Kong Press in China's Orbit.* New York: Guilford Press, 1991. 239 pp. Cloth, $38.95.

In established societies, the media can be readily studied at leisure. However, this is not the case regarding Hong Kong. A sense of urgency exists; in July 1997, Hong Kong reverts to Chinese control after a long period of British rule. This timely book focuses attention on the media there in a time of rapid transition. Against a backdrop of historical development, together with a detailed discussion of the existing complex media spectrum in Hong Kong, the contemporary situation is thoroughly discussed and analyzed by two experts well qualified to do so.

Joseph Man Chan is on the faculty of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Chin-Chuan Lee is professor of journalism at the University of Minnesota, where he also directs the China Times Center for Media and Social Studies. Their study utilizes their own devised concept of journalistic paradigms based on Thomas Kuhn's original formulation in which he uses paradigms to explain the growth of science. Employing the basic view of a paradigm in a metaphysical sense as a total world view, they apply the idea to the media in Hong Kong, noting in particular that the fundamental change in power in 1997 will force the media to undergo a significant paradigm shift.

Using various case studies which reveal how Hong Kong's media has reacted to past events, such as those surrounding the crisis in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989, the authors attempt to assess how Hong Kong's journalistic community may respond to the new realities after China takes control. They conclude with an analysis of the various options and limitations that may be present to affect the emerging pattern. Finally, the thirty-five pages of notes, an appendix section containing relevant documents, a useful chronology, and an extensive bibliography enable both professional scholars and a more general readership to use this study as a guide for substantial further research.

Alfred E. Cornebise, University of Northern Colorado

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James Critchlow, *Radio Hole-In-The-Head: Radio Liberty, An Insider's Story of Cold War Broadcasting.* Washington, D.C.: American University Press, 1995. 210 pp. Cloth, $21.95.

In the aftermath of World War II, Radio Liberty, Radio Free Europe, and Voice of America broadcast to audiences behind the iron curtain. Radio Liberty is probably least familiar to Americans. James Critchlow headed Radio Liberty's Information Department as a career Cold War broadcaster until going to the USIA in 1972. His personal account in *Radio Hole-in-the-Head: Radio Liberty* distinguishes between the overt propaganda programming of Radio Free

Europe, aimed at eastern Europe, and a more objective, journalistic approach used at Radio Liberty, aimed at the Soviet Union.

From its Munich studio, Radio Liberty began with a staff of "threadbare refugees from the Soviet Union" and young American intellectuals employed by the New York-based American Committee for Liberation of the Peoples of Russia. From the beginning, RL was "hung up in politics." Some, like Senator William Fulbright, condemned it as a subversive CIA operation. To the contrary, says Critchlow. Although CIA-funded, Radio Liberty was left to sail its own ship — becoming so independent that its nickname, "Radio Hole-in-the-Head," came from kibitzers mocking RL for "abandoning political and orthodox bureaucracy." Credit Howard H. Sargeant, second president of RL's New York "committee," for ensuring RL's independence and credibility through two decades of successive U.S. administrations, even through the McCarthy era.

If Radio Liberty was an objective newscaster to the USSR, credit goes to Boris Shub, RL's first policy advisor. From the time RL began, Shub's philosophy was to cut out blatant "propagandistic pathos and hyperbole." Shub believed — and convinced his staff to believe — that an informed and reawakened Russia would be dynamic enough to overthrow the Soviet system. It didn't need crass manipulation or Madison Avenue rhetorical styles. Honest research was the key to honest journalism.

Critchlow describes how RL sifted accurate information from various sources to maintain to Shub's ideals. Research allowed RL to program as objectively as possible to an already propagandized Soviet population. Max Ralis was a key RL audience analyst and collaborated with MIT's Ithiel de Sola Pool to create a data base useful to all Cold War broadcasters.

Radio Hole-in-the-Head is not by an historian but is for historians. Much like an oral history transcript, this is a primary source to be compared to and contrasted with other voices. Because there may be no extant RL broadcasts, hearing insiders' stories will be important. Unfortunately, except for the chapter on Fulbright's attack on CIA-funded broadcasts, Critchlow uses no reference citations and gives no bibliography. Rather, it is his story of how a journalistic ideal survives the internal and external political machinations of people who have more manipulative agendas for government-funded broadcasters. It's the stuff of oral history. To get the whole picture, we shall need to hear from more insiders like Critchlow give their versions of this important time U.S. broadcast history.

William James Ryan, Rockhurst College

Douglass K. Daniel, *Lou Grant: The Making of TV's Top Newspaper Drama.* Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1995. 380 pp. Cloth, $39.95. Paper, $17.95.

Douglass Daniel brings his news investigating and reporting skills to his study of the television drama, *Lou Grant,* which aired from 1977 to 1982. The result is a dramatic chronology of the show's inception, production, and eventual demise. Daniel has done an impressive amount of original research, and he is especially effective at incorporating his extensive first-hand interviews with many of the show's actors and producers, as well as with working journalists who reviewed the show and network executives who monitored and even censored its content. In fact, Daniel's research would make this book a useful case study in an undergraduate course in the history of journalism or television because it demonstrates the importance of intent, focus, and careful documentation for persuasive and lively investigations.

According to Daniel, "This study sought answers to a pair of broad questions about journalism. First, how did the medium's most acclaimed newspaper drama portray the profession? Second, what were viewers told about journalism?" However *Lou Grant* reveals more about the television industry than journalism. The first four of the book's nine chapters narrate the story of the show's production, from a chronicle of the history of the television newspaper drama to a detailed story of *Lou Grant's* formulation, casting, and dealings with the network. As it takes the reader from the initial ideas for a star vehicle for Ed Asner to the actual challenges of producing a realistic drama, the first half of the book reveals the many conflicts, influences, and labor that make up the business of the creative process behind the television product.

The three chapters that describe *Lou Grant's* five seasons are far less engaging, mostly because they are simply a series of extensive episode summaries. While these chapters do indeed live up to Daniel's claim for book, insofar as they describe the features of journalism that the show tried to represent, the chronological structure of the book wears thin, and does little to draw out issues and questions about journalism. Rather than a coherent analysis of the show's journalistic issues such as libel, ethics, and social responsibility, individual episodes are summarized, and here the book plods along through the years. During the final season of *Lou Grant,* Asner spoke out about and acted on his disagreement with the Reagan administration's policy toward El Salvador. Daniel devotes the penultimate chapter, "Controversy and Cancellation," to this period, but again, while he provides ample quotes, he engages in little analysis of the conflict's complex issues.

Asner writes in the foreword that *Lou Grant* "made for five years worth of meaningful television." This is a provocative claim, but what does it mean? Is *Lou Grant* important simply because it tried to represent journalism? Or because it was probably canceled in light of Anser's outspoken politics? Where are the viewers in this assessment? Daniel writes that "the impact of *Lou Grant* on viewers' perceptions of journalists and their profession cannot be measured, only surmised." Yet between measuring and surmising is assessing and

analyzing. Certainly, viewer perception can be understood through more than a few quotes from viewer letters to networks and affiliates. Certainly, viewers are more astute and complex than that.

The question at the heart of *Lou Grant: The Making of TV's Top Newspaper Drama* is not about how the show represented journalism. Instead, it needs to ask, "What is the industry's profit motive and narrative conventions?" And, most importantly, "What does a television show such as *Lou Grant* mean to viewers?" While Daniel does not address these questions, his book provides ample primary information about what he calls "the major forces that shaped the series" to help students, historians, and journalists to begin to explore its opening claim.

Monique Dufour, Syracuse University

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Wayne Dawkins, *Black Journalists: The NABJ Story.* Sicklerville, N.J.: August Press, 1993. 208 pp. Paper, $12.95.

The National Association of Black Journalists may be the most successful organization of black media employees in history. With thousands of members and hundreds of thousands of dollars in its coffers, NABJ in 1996 celebrated its twenty-first anniversary. Consequently, a history of NABJ would offer insight on the employment aspect of the relationship between blacks and the mass media. In *Black Journalists: The NABJ Story,* Wayne Dawkins attempts to share with readers his account of how NABJ came to be and developed.

This book is a welcome addition to the literature on blacks and the media, but there is still more to do on the topic. Subtitles may not mean much to some but they do to this reviewer. Consequently, Dawkins' *Black Journalists* disappoints because its fails to deliver what the subtitle promised. Published in 1993, Dawkins chronicle of the NABJ ends in 1983 and covers only eight years of the story. In the preface, Dawkins acknowledges the book is about the period of the "old NABJ" — the period 1975-1983 when the organization was headed by one of the original founders. Readers will have to depend on a second volume from Dawkins or someone else for the rest of the story or at least a comparison of the "new" NABJ with the original one.

While this eight-year period covers less than, at the time of publication, half of the NABJ lifetime, it provides the only lengthy chronicle of NABJ to be found. Dawkins, a NABJ member since 1981, who professes his "love" for the organization, talked to an estimated 120 persons and combed through numerous "basements, studies, and attics" to fashion an account that promised to "praise NABJ" where appropriate and "unflinchingly critique its blunders and excesses" when appropriate.

Black Journalists consists of a preface that provides a cursory history of the relationship of blacks and the media, mostly print, and how many media

organizations sought to diversify their reporting staffs in the wake of the urban riots/disorders of the mid 1960s. After a chapter on the organization's founding, the rest of the book centers around the NABJ national conventions. There are also brief biographical profiles of forty-three of the persons most active in this early period of the history of NABJ.

Within the context of the period covered, Dawkins does a very good job of showing how it was not always smooth sailing for NABJ, particularly the early years. Dawkins tells readers of the personality conflicts, factional (e.g. print vs. broadcast, urban vs. smaller markets) disputes, and failed and successful grabs for power during this period of the organization's adolescence.

Dawkins provides an especially good account of the NABJ dilemmas and paranoia. Who could be members? Would the black "journalists" be outnumbered by "semijournalists" (black disc jockeys, black advertising industry people, white journalists who chose to become members, or journalism professors — black and white)? Would NABJ be an organization of laws or personalities? Should they establish a national office at a historically black college or university? Should the organization take a position on the Janet Cooke controversy? Should NABJ go on record as demanding that Jesse Jackson be included in debates associated with the 1984 presidential campaign?

Dawkins also tells of the dedication of many of the early officers who sacrificed their time and money, when the organization did not have any of the latter, and how those sacrifices were the only reason NABJ survived its infancy to be able to claim a place as a player in the media realm. Dawkins account ends in 1983 with the election of the first nonfounder, Merv Aubespin, as NABJ president, the long time NABJ executive director, Paul Brock, "no longer in the picture," and no founding members on the board of directors.

The writing style is straightforward but repetitious at times, particularly with personal biographical information of the players in the organization. Historians will be disappointed in Dawkins' method of documentation. For example, Dawkins writes that Chuck Stone was fired from the *Chicago Defender* for "authorizing stories that made Mayor (Richard) Daley look bad" (23) but one must assume the quote came from Stone.

In summary, *Black Journalists* is a needed addition to the literature of media history, but readers should be reminded it is "a" story of the National Association of Black Journalists and not the whole one.

Phillip Jeter, Florida A&M University

Elizabeth M.B.G. Hughes, *The Logical Choice: How Political Commercials Use Logic to Win Votes.* Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1994. 182 pp. Cloth, $46. Paper, $27.50.

Does logic play a role in televised political commercials? The question may seem puzzling *only* if one assumes that political commercials "work" by purely irrational or emotive means. On the other hand, if one agrees with the position of rhetoricians who argue that *all* forms of communications articulate rhetorical elements, then a better understanding of exactly how logic is used in political, televised commercials would seem worthwhile. The interest of Elizabeth Hughes' *The Logical Choice* lies not only in her demonstration of the ways in which political commercials make use of logical arguments, but also in her suggestion that a better knowledge of the history of logical argument offers a useful tool kit for understanding contemporary forms of political communication.

What is surprising (and, indeed, provided the starting-point for Hughes' investigation, originally in the form of a doctoral dissertation) is the extent to which the literature on contemporary political communication has exaggerated the power of the visual dimension, and in so doing has denied a role for logical analysis in understanding the relations between political, televised commercials and democratic governance. Without some means of evaluating the validity of arguments, citizens (and for that matter, analysts) are deprived of understanding substantial structures of persuasion. In this sense, Hughes' book aims to restore an unfortunately neglected "methodology" of analysis to its proper place both in the workings of democratic polities and in the history of argumentation.

One reason, Hughes suggests, why logical analysis has been ignored in the literature stems from the perception that logic only concerns truth claims, a misperception she corrects early in the book. Logic, she writes, "is about relationships obtaining among claims such that they do or do not justify other claims" (9). That relationality established, Hughes then proceeds to make clear that the logical understanding of the relationships between claims falls into the two major categories of syllogistic and symbolic relationships, each requiring a particular logic.

Syllogistic logic argues that relations between claims primarily take the form of enthymematic arguments (incomplete syllogisms in which a premise or conclusion is left out). Enthymematic arguments classify claims into four sentence-types (referred to as A, E, I and O claim-types) and establishes the relations among them according to a "square of opposition" (contraries, subcontraries, contradiction, and subalternation). Syllogistic logic, then, is a tool by which to evaluate the validity of the relations between premises and conclusions, not truth or falsity, but rather that there be consistency from premise to conclusion. Claims can this be universal and positive (type-A); universal and negative (type-E); positive and particular (type-I), and negative and particular (type-O). As thirteenth century Scholastic logic pointed out, all valid syllogisms can be divided into "figures," each figure in turn displaying a number

of "moods." Hughes' account of these make up some of the more fascinating pages of the book (see especially 40 ff). In addition to formal methods of syllogistic analysis, Hughes also draws upon the history of argumentation for examples of a number of informal techniques that fallacious argumentation makes use of. These include *Ad hominem* syllogisms, as well as the less familiar *Ad populum*, *Ad baculum*, and *Ad verucundiam* informal fallacies.

However, the rigidities of syllogistic arguments call for another form of logic that provides a more flexible symbology for representing relationships particularly in visually-based communication. Symbolic logic provides for a greater range of understanding connections within claims with more than two premises. By allowing for multiple premises and multiple steps in deriving a conclusion, arguments in symbolic logic are more akin to mathematical proofs. Hughes discusses these in some detail, focusing upon the range of connections afforded by the connectors "and," "or," and "if-then," as well as the more complex argumentative forms of Conditional Proof and "Reductio ad Absurdam."

If Hughes makes a persuasive formal case for the use of logic in evaluating the kinds of claims made by televised political commercials, what of the empirical part of her study? Her sample is a small one, drawn from the videotape "Classics of Televised Political Advertising" (1989). Although this tape provided her with all of the examples she presents in *The Logical Choice,* Hughes processed over two hundred commercials from a universe of data believed to be about 1,600 items before the 1990 election season. Perhaps Hughes' most interesting finding concerned "the scarcity of invalid arguments" (123). "While the informal fallacies are evident in visually-presented political communications, few of the televised political commercials I studied were guilty of invalid argumentation; if they were logical at all (which most were), they were likely to be valid. *Soundness,* of course, is an entirely separate issue. . ." (123).

At the conclusion of her study, Hughes finds that "argumentation characterizable by logic occurs *quite routinely* in visually-presented political communication" (141, emphasis added). And yet having succeeded in her demonstration, Hughes seems at something of a loss in evaluating the implications of her study. Other than greater emphasis on understanding the extent to which political commercials are enthymematic, and a call for greater care by advertising agencies in making enthymematic presentations, Hughes seems to step back from the very implications of her own premise in undertaking the study: namely, its implications for better equipping a democratic citizenry in countering persuasive communication. Which is why, it seems to me, the study of rhetoric, or the logic of argumentation matters in the first place.

Her somewhat unsatisfying conclusion aside, Hughes' short book is a valuable contribution to the study of political communication. It deserves widespread use by professional analysts and citizens alike.

Michael Dorland, Carleton University

Shanto Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994. 208 pp. Cloth, $22.95. Paper, $11.95.

Just as we position ourselves in front of the TV set to focus on the final presidential debates of this century, UCLA political scientist and communication studies professor Shanto Iyengar takes his stand in front of the screen to shake his fist and call network journalists to task. He uses a six-year analysis of television's impact on public opinion about political responsibility and accountability to condemn the industry for providing "a distorted depiction of public affairs." While Professor Iyengar's observations and conclusions won't surprise broadcast journalists, the social science methodology which he applied to his study and the issues studied — Iran-Contra arms dealing, the Reagan years, and related crime and poverty social issues — should interest communications scholars.

Rather than providing a "marketplace of ideas," television provides only a passing parade of specific events, what the author maintains is a "context of no context." The author argues that the mass media in a democratic society should furnish a "mirror image" of political reality. Viewers should be assisted in seeing the connections between governmental actions or inaction's and social problems. "For a number of reasons, however, American network news fails to live up to this ideal," Iyengar argues.

Using grants from the National Science Foundation, University of California, and the John and Mary R. Markle Foundation, the author designed a content analysis, field experiment and correlational analysis project. The goal was to identify the degree of thematic or episodic framing — subtle alterations in a statement or presentation of judgment and choice problems — in television news. While much of the language utilized in this nine-chapter book is more readily understood by political scientists and social scientists, journalists will have no problems following the research strategies to their unsurprising conclusions. (One reviewer cited on the book's back cover crows: ". . .Here is powerful additional evidence for those of us who like to flay television for its contributions to the trivialization of public discourse and the erosion of democratic accountability.")

Cast the obvious aside — preoccupation with images of candidates spun by the campaign handlers, bandwagon coverage of horse race results from state-by-state primary elections, fund-raisers, and delegate counts — and concentrate on what the framing studies conducted for this book reveal about how audiences react to what television news reports. Here is where this research offers some valuable insight.

Using a sample of ABC, CBS, and NBC news stories between 1981 and 1986, Iyengar sought to assess attributions of responsibility with respect to issues and governmental decision related to public security (law and order) and issues of social or economic welfare. Abstracts of daily network newscasts were compiled by the Television News Archive at Vanderbilt University. Residents of the Three Village area of Suffolk County in New York participated in the nine

media framing experiments. The author concedes that Suffolk County presented the researchers with participants who were more educated, more Catholic and Jewish, more affluent, and more likely to have voted in the last presidential election than a more representative sample of the U.S. population.

All that placed in balance, the study participants watched videos of news stories and answered a questionnaire designed to test their attitudes. The researchers found that the TV news coverage of crime and terrorism was framed almost exclusively in episodic fashion. Their analysis of the participants' views was that because crime is a highly threatening and emotionally charged, it was remarkable that only a modest amount of exposure to news about illegal drugs, white or black crime, and the criminal justice process was sufficient to induce significant shifts in viewers' attributions.

Five experiments of coverage of poverty, unemployment, and racial inequality reflected relative little attention by the networks compared to crime and terrorism in the six-year period studied. Researchers concluded that network news stories can affect how people attribute responsibility for poverty and racial inequality. The study results indicate that the tendency of Americans to consider poor people responsible for their own plight may be due not only to dominant cultural values but also to news coverage of poverty in which images of poor people predominate, the author argues.

Turning to the analysis of the effects of framing on attributions of responsibility for the secret Iran-Contra arms sales during the Reagan administration, this study clearly establishes that the revelations of Reagan's handling of the issues involved scandalized his reputation, what the political scientists call "an approval-diminishing event." Nearly seventy percent of the news reports studied put the Iran-Contra stories in a context of political controversy. The framing experiment established that American public opinion about the arms sale to Iran was significantly molded by television coverage, even to the point of holding President Reagan personally responsible. The author argues that because network news can significantly affect presidential popularity, presidential rhetoric and other image-guiding efforts are generally ineffective in boosting popularity.

There is a significant observation within the last three paragraphs of *Is Anyone Responsible?* that deserves far more attention than it receives in this book. The author noted, "Nowhere is the debilitating influence of episodic framing on political accountability more apparent than in presidential election campaigns." He decries the tendency to reduce a campaign to daily ten-second sound bites or horse-race reporting. Now here's a cry for substance that the television industry needs to ponder. Otherwise, Iyengar's concluding warning dooms us to a dreadful entry into the next century:

> Television news may well prove to be the opiate of American society, propagating a false sense of national well-being and

thereby postponing the time at which American political leaders will be forced to confront the myriad economic and social ills confronting this society.

Jean Chance, University of Florida

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Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Ken Auletta, and Thomas E. Patterson, *1-800-President: The Report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Television and the Campaign of 1992 With Background Papers*. New York: The Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1993. 117 pp. Paper, $9.95.

In November 1996, Americans will decide who will occupy the Oval Office for the next four years. For voters determined to see a Democrat remain in the White House or for those anxious to return the reins of power to a Republican, this will be an easy decision. For undecided voters, however, this decision will require serious and thoughtful reflection. As in the past, undecided voters will rely on the broadcast and print media to provide them with information and insights about presidential candidates. Among other things, voters will be exposed to information about the candidates' background, record in office, and political agenda. Depending on the campaign strategies of particular candidates and decisions made by network executives, the electorate may even be given an opportunity to hear candidates address major domestic and foreign policy issues.

In an environment in which voters are presented with accurate information about presidential candidates, deciding who possesses the experience and skills necessary to guide America into the twenty-first century would be a relatively painless process. Yet, as the contributors to this study point out, the media have not made this process painless. On the contrary, by purposely distorting information, providing unsubstantiated reports about candidates' personal and professional lives, and focusing on political scandals to improve network ratings, the press has done a great disservice to voters searching for the truth. The media may indeed be regarded as a watchdog, but in many recent presidential elections, it has failed to keep a watchful eye over presidential candidates. In fact, by concentrating on the image rather than the substance of candidates, the media have failed to provide voters with the information they require to make informed and intelligent decisions.

Recognizing the many problems plaguing the media's coverage of presidential campaigns, the Twentieth Century Fund, a New York-based nonprofit, nonpartisan organization which "sponsors and supervises timely analyses of economic policy, foreign affairs, and domestic political issues," assembled a task force to discuss television coverage of the 1992 presidential campaign and to suggest possible reforms. The task force included such distinguished journalists, academics, and policy advisors as Benjamin Bradlee,

Tom Brokaw, Peter Jennings, Marvin Kalb, Nelson Polsby, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Thomas Patterson, and Theodore Sorenson. This study is the product of the task force's deliberations and the three papers it commissioned to provide a more detailed examination of the media's coverage of presidential campaigns.

One-third of this short volume highlights what issues were discussed by the task force during its three meetings and includes some brief comments by individual members. The remaining pages consist of the three commissioned papers by Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Ken Auletta, and Thomas Patterson. Hall Jamieson's paper focuses on the subversive effects of the media's coverage of presidential campaigns; Auletta's examines the many problems which arise when reporters assigned to cover campaigns huddle together on buses and planes to record every word uttered by candidates; and Patterson's study, by far the most provocative of the three, concentrates on possible reforms which could be implemented by the media to improve coverage of presidential campaigns.

Media scholars looking for an in-depth analysis of how the press covers presidential campaigns will likely be disappointed by this study. It does provide some interesting anecdotes about Governor Clinton's reaction to embarrassing questions on the Phil Donahue program and at times offers useful insights about the frequent appearances made by candidates on various talk shows. However, there is little in this study that has not been addressed in considerably more detail elsewhere. Indeed, Hall Jamieson's and Patterson's contributions to this volume were either based on, or taken directly from, their respective books, *Dirty Politics: Deception, Distraction, and Democracy* and *Out of Order*. Although useful, Auletta's paper on the circus-like atmosphere created by reporters on the campaign trail, is hardly enough to justify the publication of a book-length study.

Given the number of prominent individuals participating on this task force, it is surprising, not to mention, disconcerting, that a more thought-provoking collection was not produced. The central problem plaguing this study is not the theme of the task force, or the various members who served on it. The main problem is that the authors have not selected material that would most likely generate interest and debate among media practitioners and scholars. Reprinting previously published material may be suitable for anthologies, but it is hardly acceptable for a task force seeking to pave new ground. Far more would have been achieved had the task force simply transcribed the exchanges which took place between participants at the task force meetings. By dialing *1-800-President* during the 1996 campaign, voters may be able to discuss their concerns with presidential candidates and their staff, but it is unlikely that they will receive many satisfactory answers by flipping through the book by the same name.

Donald Abelson, University of Western Ontario

Thomas C. Leonard, *News for All: America's Coming-of-Age with the Press.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. 288 pp. Cloth, $30.

Recent discussions about so-called public or civic journalism are rooted in the assumption that the nature and quality of everyday discourse has foundered since the advent of television news. A public fed (and fed-up) with the pabulum of celebrity news, sound-bites, and instant polling — instead of thoughtful arguments about important issues of the day — has lost either its appreciation or appetite for long-form daily news coverage.

In *News For All: America's Coming-of-Age with the Press*, Thomas C. Leonard employs a number of innovative techniques to demonstrate how the dilemma of declining newspaper readership has its roots — and, perhaps its antidote — in "the antique patterns of circulation in America." By focusing on the business of recruiting readers, rather than on the news itself, Leonard sidesteps most of the traditional incidents that press historians usually bring up when they discuss circulation growth. For instance, he gives short shrift to the era of yellow journalism, but takes great pains to explain why, in the 1830s, many northerners opposed sending abolitionist newspapers into the south. Following the work of Richards (1970) and Nerone (1989), Leonard explains, "Reformers, in spreading news for all, were sweeping aside the old political leaders, the familiar newspapers, the established parties." The old guard felt that the dissident abolitionist press, which sought a mass readership encouraged disruption of the entire social order. Once the news was the exclusive concern of an elite who published it for a limited audience that was schooled in what texts meant. Opponents of the abolitionist press, such as Harrison Gray Otis of Massachusetts, warned that "Men, women and children [would be] stimulated, flattered, and frightened" by the antislavery press which openly sought their support for the struggle. Later in the chapter, Leonard parallels the negative reception of the abolitionist press with the local resentment that network television crews received covering the civil rights marches in the 1960s south. He concludes:

> when revolutions in the media accompany revolutions in society, they force new readings and create new bases for legitimacy. In three centuries of debate on race in North America, social action has been quickest when media allowed words and pictures to reach new people and simultaneously created a new range of meanings. The paired growth of audience and interpretive choices is both the opportunity and the menace of the media.

While Leonard does not avoid quantitative circulation, he paints a more clearly defined picture by drawing upon a broad palette of qualitative historical methods. By deconstructing photographs and paintings, by interpreting the diaries and personal papers, by analyzing the names on nineteenth century

subscription rosters, and most importantly, by reading the actual texts of the newspapers themselves including their published merchandising efforts, Leonard explains the appeal that the American press held for its audiences during the past three centuries. In separate sections, he illustrates the regard the nineteenth century reader had for the press. First, he examines drawings of New Yorkers of the 1830s lounging about in taverns reading their papers, then he analyzes formal oil paintings of newspaper readers at the family hearth and the work of William Hartnett whose highly realistic still-lifes prominently featured newspapers; details in Hartnett's work were so sharp that one could read the print that was painted on the canvas. By dissecting the composition and context of these depictions and comparing them to what we have learned in recent historical studies, Leonard uses newspapers to explain the evolution of the public forum in American life.

In a chapter entitled, "Everyone an Editor," Leonard creates a rough but workable history of newspaper market research. Looking at everything from nineteenth-century gift subscriptions to the development of clipping services to turn-of-the-century attempts to measure eye movement on the page by placing plaste cups over narcotized eyeballs, to WPA photos of reading together, to the focus groups of the 1990s, Leonard argues that readers have always tailored their news-reading behavior to meet their own uses and gratifications rather than follow the dictates of editors as to what is important news.

He shifts from this point to examine the how modern circulation directors and newspaper advertising directors found it more profitable to segment and to narrow the audience for the newspaper. Using the same broad panoply of evidence from Jane Addams and Upton Sinclair to subscription appeals by Publisher's Clearinghouse, Leonard shows how the business offices have taken over and have thereby possibly endangered broad-based newspaper readership. This fundamental philosophical change, he argues, has begun to reshape political discourse and strain the integuments of American society.

The strength of Leonard's writing is that he has created a compelling text for the 1990s by examining history from a contemporary perspective. In effect, he has initiated a dialogue between the present and the past about the most vexing concern facing the American newspaper industry. Leonard gathers his evidence from so many sources, including so many modern sources, that he invests this dialogue with a disarming and impressive immediacy. This is a book that can help circulation directors and publishers win back readers. It is also a book that can show how to bring modern meaning to academic history. For that reason, this is a book that should be as welcome in newspaper offices as it is in the halls of academe.

Alan R. Fried, University of South Carolina

Dennis W. Mazzocco, *Networks of Power: Corporate TV's Threat to Democracy*. Boston: South End Press, 1994. 208 pp. Cloth, $30. Paper, $14.

Although the recent acquisition of Capital Cities/ABC by Disney to some extent renders this book out of date, the stories it tells are still interesting and timely ones. Indeed, anyone interested in reading a critical and, in fact, scathing account of the histories of ABC and Capital Cities by a former television insider won't be disappointed. In the tradition of Upton Sinclair's *Brass Check*, this book is part memoir, part history, and part prescription for how broadcasting ought to be handled in America — for the public rather than, as the author puts it, solely for the financial and political benefits of its owners and overseers.

The book's first chapter chronicles the author's nearly twenty-year in broadcasting, from his involvement in college radio, through his ABC years in lower and middle management, to his return to radio. He portrays himself as one who at first was intoxicated by broadcasting, but who was then slowly awakened to its harsher realities through a series of disillusioning experiences. His stories are valuable since rarely are accounts of the histories of major American institutions penned by those who come from their lower ranks. Especially interesting are sections that describe the impact of ABC's labor relations on its workers, and his accounts of the contemporary commercial radio scene.

Chapters 2 through 5, arguably the book's most interesting and useful ones, describe the history of ABC from its founding in 1943 by wealthy conservative Edward J. Noble, the rise of Capital Cities, the takeover of ABC by Capital Cities in 1985, and finally, the events and conduct of the newly merged giants up to 1993. While it is obvious from page one that the author has a personal ax to grind, the stories provide fascinating details about the complex web of associations that span corporate and government boundaries.

The narrative is liberally laced with compelling biographies of the fiscally and politically conservative cast of characters who have played important roles in these corporation's histories. The chapter on the early history of ABC, for example, begins with a biography of its founder, Edward J. Noble, how he happened to move from the world of Life Savers into the world of television (he was the founder and owners of this candy company), and how his conservative ideology shaped the network's history.

Then there is the story of one of the early players in Capital Cities' history, lawyer-turned-spy William Casey, who played a central role in the early history of Capital Cities as its legal counsel. He describes how Reagan's famous CIA director invested heavily in the corporation and used his relationship with it in a variety of unsettling ways once he became a government official. According to Mazzocco, by the time of the takeover, the value of Casey's 34,000 shares of Capital Cities stock had risen to more than seven million dollars.

Throughout the book, with writing that is generally clear but sometimes plodding, the author attempts to get the reader to agree with one of

his central themes — the present system of rules that govern how television is financed and regulated has led us to a situation where the public good is subverted. Instead, he claims only the interests of the broadcasting owners and politicians they are in bed with are being served, a situation that undermines democracy in America. But, unlike some authors who critique the system but fail to provide plans for how to fix it, in his final chapter, Mazzocco offers solutions for the ills he claim afflict us. Here is where the book become most didactic, and while it's fair to assume that the author's stridency may be a deterrent for some readers, his arguments are still of interest. At the very least, this final chapter offers a good jumping-off point for class discussions on the political economy of the American media, since it offers an alternative model that its author purports would better serve the citizenry.

Patricia Dooley, University of Maine

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Richard McDonald, ed., *A Foot in the Door: The Reminisces of Lucile McDonald.* Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1995. 296 pp. Paper, $19.95.

This intriguing book reveals the adventures and the contradictions in the seventy-year professional career of Lucile Saunders McDonald, who was at various times was a pioneering woman foreign correspondent; a reporter, editor and columnist for Pacific Northwest and Alaska newspapers; a successful writer of juvenile fiction; a popular writer on regional history; a wife and mother; and a prolific author of her own autobiographies. Her son, Richard, who compiled this work, and historian Lorraine McConaghy, who contributed the overview, found five autobiography-like accounts after McDonald's death in 1992, at the age of ninety-three. Included in this volume are two extended excerpts, covering the years 1915 to 1932 and 1942 to 1966, along with commentaries and samples of McDonald's journalistic writing.

Of the two excerpts, the first, which describes McDonald's struggle to enter newspapering in Oregon during World War I and, from there, to develop herself into an adventurous foreign correspondent in South America and the Middle East, is the most interesting. McDonald describes the condescension and hostility she faced from the boorish male editors forced to employ a woman in the newsroom during wartime. McDonald was not a fluid writer but her matter-of-fact style works to underscore the detailed insults, rejections, and, ultimately, successes that she recalled. By her account, the only support she received to pursue a newspapering career came from professors at the University of Oregon School of Journalism, who helped her with instruction, job leads, and, occasionally, paid sewing and baby-sitting work.

McDonald never finished her journalism degree, but by 1920 she was established as a feature writer on the *Portland Oregonian.* From there, she launched herself on an extraordinary series of journalistic episodes that were later

summarized in Ishbel Ross' landmark 1936 work, *Ladies of the Press*. In South America, McDonald became the first woman correspondent to visit the recently discovered site of Macchu Picu, reported from Buenos Aires and other South American cities, and then went to New York to work for United Press. In 1923, after marrying Harold D. McDonald, an Oregon game warden whom she met while working on a story, she returned to the Northwest and spent nearly three years editing a newspaper in Cordova, Alaska. In 1927, her husband took a job as Middle East salesman for Caterpillar Tractor, and McDonald launched a second career as a foreign correspondent, reporting to the *New York Times* from Istanbul, Turkey. That career, and the first excerpt from her autobiography, ended when the Depression prompted the *Times* to downsize its foreign service, and McDonald returned from Europe to Wenatchee, Washington, where in 1932 her husband purchased a tractor dealership.

The second excerpt of McDonald's autobiography begins ten years later, in 1942, when McDonald returned to newspaper work as a copy editor on the *Seattle Times* after World War II again opened more professional opportunities for women. She stayed at the *Seattle Times* for twenty-four years, writing an estimated 1,200 feature stories and developing a regional reputation as a popular historian. This excerpt, which describes a more conventional newspaper journalism career, ends in 1966, when she officially retired. However, she continued to supply freelance feature articles to the *Seattle Times* until 1979, when she became a regular columnist on local history for the suburban *Bellevue Journal-American*.

These autobiographical excerpts only briefly discuss McDonald's prolific writing career outside newspapering, which included twenty-one books in which she was listed as sole author; thirteen collaborative books, primarily teenage girls' fiction; and several contributions to historical anthologies.

The length and complexity of McDonald's career illustrates the difficulty involved in searching for meaning in the historical evaluation of women in journalism. As Susan Henry has written, viewing a woman in journalism history as someone who overcame personal or social forces to succeed in a male-dominated profession tells only part of her story. Much of McDonald's story falls outside of that paradigm and this book. Furthermore, as Lorraine McConaghy points out in her valuable foreword, McDonald was professionally neither an insightful writer nor a careful historian. She refused to be considered a feminist and willingly sacrificed her own more promising career to follow her husband. Nor was she an easy person to work with or to write about. What *A Foot in the Door* presents, then, is not a fully realized portrait of a remarkable woman in journalism history. Instead, it provides some revealing pieces of an intriguing puzzle, a challenge rather than a resolution, and there is value in that as well.

Steve Ponder, University of Oregon

Gonzalo R. Soruco, *Cubans and the Mass Media in South Florida*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996. 151 pp. Cloth, $39.95.

Cubans and the Mass Media in South Florida is an excellent piece of research detailing mass media habits of Cuban heritage audiences in south Florida. In addition to the invaluable information about this U.S. population segment, Soruco places the population of study within historical, sociopolitical, and media market contexts. Soruco expands his discussion on Cubans by including Mexican American and Puerto Rican audience issues in several parts of the book and by discussing pre-U.S. immigration media environments that existed for many Cubans now residing in Florida. Highlights regarding Cuban intragroup variability include gender, age, and language of medium, and "neighborhood Hispanicity" (Hispanic population concentration). The author provides an abundance of tables and figures and conducts engaging analysis throughout the text.

The book is organized in seven chapters. Chapters 1 through 3 give the reader information about the people, the media, and research challenges with Hispanics. The initial chapter, "The Cuban Exiles of South Florida" concentrates on several aspects of Cubans. This chapter is packed with the type of information that would allow it as an in-depth press article. It is a complicated yet concise weaving of topics of Cuban diversity, economic and political power, migration patterns, cultural level assimilation, multilevel processes of assimilation, and the connection between assimilation and media use.

The second chapter, called "The Problems with Hispanic Research," might give new researchers a bad feeling about conducting research on Hispanics with the present title. I would be more inclined to call such a chapter "Research Challenges with Hispanics" or "Issues in Hispanic Research." Hispanic research, also "Latina/o" research in my writings, needs to be approached with specialized knowledge. Soruco succinctly covers points such as population growth, operational terms implemented by the U.S. Census, sampling methods, questionnaire design, and assimilation and mass media behavior. The author's discussion on method is refreshing material, some of which is not covered in the handbook by Marin and Marin (1991) called *Research with Hispanic Populations*. The author's space constraint certainly prevented him from a fuller and more up to date review of the literature on acculturation, assimilation, and mass media. However, a key mass communication article in this area by Subervi-Velez (1986), is included in this chapter and is cited elsewhere.

The third and fourth chapters called "The Media in Miami" and "The Exiles and the Media" give detailed descriptions of the broadcast and print media environment in south Florida catering to Spanish-language audiences and give the research design. Of particular interest for international communication research are descriptions of island radio with political and aggressive journalistic traditions transferred to Florida. Also, the author describes CIA-backed radio

programs transmitted to Cuba as part of United State's low intensity broadcast war against communism and Fidel Castro.

In chapter 4, Soruco describes his research design and main variables. In his discussion, he places his research within traditional mass communication research on media impact.

Chapters 5 and 6 present the relationship that Cubans have had with U.S. and pre-immigration media. In the chapter called, "When Cultures Clash: The Exiles and the Press" Soruco explains the strained relationship between Cuban readers and the *Miami Herald*, and Cuban's newspaper habits. For researchers interested in Hispanic intergroup comparisons, an important point that the author makes is that Cubans probably have the highest newspaper exposure tendencies when compared with Mexican and Puerto Rican populations. "The Exiles and Television" provides parallel information with regard to television and Cuban viewers. The variable called "neighborhood Hispanicity" is used for analysis.

The book would be enhanced by a separate "conclusion" chapter containing an overview of the material presented and recommendations for future research on Cubans and other U.S. Hispanic media users. Early in the book, Soruco draws attention to the fact that his research fills a void in the research literature on Hispanics and the mass media. The author is modest in the description of his work's contribution to the field of communication, since it fills more than a void in the literature. This text will certainly constitute a mainstay on Hispanic audiences along with Greenberg, Burgoon, Burgoon, and Korzenny's (1986) *Mexican Americans and the Mass Media.*

How the author envisions that his work be carried forward by students and other researchers interested in ethnic audiences is significant and should be elaborated in a forward looking conclusion chapter, similar to the one found in the book by Greenberg, et al. A sampling of actual questions used in the *Cubans and Mass Media* survey could accompany the tables where results are presented or be inserted as notes or appendices. Easily identifiable numerical annoyances appear in some tables, but these rounding or typographical problems should not detract from the power of the results.

Diana I. Rios, University of New Mexico

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Mary Ann Weston, *Native Americans in the News: Images of Indians in the Twentieth Century Press. Contributions to the Study of Mass Media and Communications, Number 49.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996. 200 pp. Cloth, $55.

This modest volume employs a case study method to illustrate the changing climate of media attention to Native American issues in the decades since 1920. In the best tradition of multicultural journalism, Weston argues that interpretation and context must supplement so-called "objective" reporting for

the mainstream newspaper reader whose decidedly limited knowledge of aboriginal affairs was and is derived in great part from those very media. Avoiding the pitfalls she critiques, Weston's analysis relies on the interpretive contexts provided by anthropology alongside what the media say about Indians.

In the 1920s, "cultural pluralism" replaced assimilation as the dominant solution to "the Indian problem." In 1922, white activists, including John Collier and D. H. Lawrence, used publicity to derail legislation appropriating Pueblo lands; the Pueblos were "good Indians" who resisted the soulless corruption of mainstream America. In 1923, the fledgling American Society of Newspaper Editors adopted Canons of Journalism which failed to address explicitly the special problems of fair reporting of minority issues. Nonetheless, the press deemed itself obligated to provide the accurate information crucial to the functioning of a democratic society; its citizenry, however, was implicitly constructed as homogeneous.

The 1930s focused around the Indian Reorganization Act. Roosevelt's Commissioner of Indian Affairs (1933-45), John Collier, administered an "Indian New Deal" emphasizing cultural preservation. Despite a certain paternalism, and failure to implement fully his reforming vision, Collier's commitment to the "civilization" of the first Americans moved toward local control. His model of the "centralized cultural institutions" of the Southwest (52), however, proved inapplicable to other groups.

Native American participation in World War II dominated the 1940s. Although many Native Americans served during the war, the media's "Braves on the Warpath" (85) imagery was exaggerated and stereotypical, partly in response to Collier's rhetorical efforts. The dangerous bellicose traditionalist transformed by patriotism into an ally was a titillating image for wartime readers seeking inspirational journalism.

The social adjustments of the 1950s are represented by termination of special status for the Menominee tribe (occurring largely outside the public eye because the Menomini contradicted easy stereotypes about Indians) and the (often painful and unsuccessful) relocation of many Native Americans to urban areas (described in the media through rose-colored glasses). The public mood required Indians to disappear as a distinct segment of American society. Cold war rhetoric, buttressed by the burgeoning civil rights movement, portrayed emancipation from continued dependence as the sole desirable outcome; Indians who resisted were victims blamed, responsible for their own problems. Native American concerns with treaty rights were minimally reflected in the media. Hard news stories failed to capture the context that made Indians different; "the 1950s good Indian was someone who fitted in" (105).

The political turmoil of the 1960s and 1970s is framed around the occupations at Alcatraz Island in 1969 and Wounded Knee in 1973. Both received sympathetic initial coverage, disintegrating to images of violence and savagery. Both were pseudo-events, staged in order to be reported by mainstream media. For the first time, Native Americans became the spokespersons for their own positions. Standing Rock Sioux activist Vine Deloria, Jr., is characterized as a master publicist, in the tradition of John Collier. Meanwhile, journalists,

especially in response to African Americans, were becoming more sophisticated about presenting interpretive context for racial issues.

Since 1980, cultural issues, illustrated by the sports team mascot uproar, have dominated. Native Americans talk back, insisting on media coverage from their points of view.

Journalism ethics requires attention to inaccurate stereotypic images, particularly those created inadvertently as a result of journalists being men and women of their own times. Throughout the century, images of Indians are "embodied . . .in the formulation, writing, selection, and presentation of the news" (10). Recurrent images include the romanticized noble savage, the degraded Indian belittled by humor, the exotic relic of the past, and, increasingly, the "involved Indian citizen" (59).

In all periods, journalists have failed to appreciate the diversity of Native American traditions. Stereotypes heavily influenced by Plains ceremonialism are applied promiscuously to all groups. Interestingly, local reporting is more accurate and detailed than the national or wire service coverage, more often allowing Indians to speak for themselves.

Weston demonstrates, unequivocally but without condemnation of earlier practices, that newspaper reporting has been colored by conventions of journalism derived from mainstream American society. Her case studies challenge the profession to reflect on itself. For example, as giving voice to Native Americans themselves increasingly becomes the hallmark of responsible journalism, we might ask what Indians think constitutes "news." The contemporary Native American press, targeting a specialty audience, is quite distinct from the mainstream media in its focus on local context, community identity, and individual successes. Mainstream journalists might well emulate these priorities in attempting fair and factual coverage, defined as culturally appropriate and culturally intelligible.

Regna Darnell, University of Western Ontario.

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Cecil J. Williams, *Freedom & Justice: Four Decades of the Civil Rights Struggle as Seen by a Black Photographer of the Deep South*. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1995. 256 pp. Cloth, $39.95.

Freedom & Justice is a collection of photographs, spanning forty years beginning in the 1940s, taken by professional photographer Cecil J. Williams. Williams, a freelance photographer for such publications as *Jet*, the *Afro-American*, the *Crisis*, and the *Pittsburgh Courier*, chronicles the struggles to end segregation at all sociological and cultural levels in the South, particularly in his native state of South Carolina. The more than two hundred photographs illustrate not only key events and well-known participants in the Civil Rights

Movement, but also the plight and actions of many nameless individuals who continued the fight against racism despite little or no recognition.

Being an event photographer, Williams gained access to a large number of civil rights campaigns, and he basically allows his photos to tell the stories, providing brief explanatory cutlines and longer introductory pieces for historical context placed at the beginnings of each chapter. Organized in chronological order, the photos and historical background all the reader to "follow" Williams' progress, and that of his race, down the long path from the overt racial prejudice of the 1940s to the desegregation period at the end of the 1960s. His final chapter, "A Boy's Memories. . . A Man's Dreams," shows a mere glimpse of milestones in the 1980s and 1990s that marked the continuing struggle for racial freedom and equal justice under the laws of the United States.

Some of Williams' more compelling (and distressing) photos record the details of such events as the 1960 protests of the shops of S.H. Kress & Company and the Orangeburg Massacre of 8 February 1968, in which three students were killed and twenty-seven others injured by state police. During the preceding days, South Carolina State College students had attempted to integrate the All-Star Bowling Lane, a "whites only" facility located about a mile away from the college and Claflin College. However, the students, who were congregated near the edge of the State campus, were peacefully sitting around bonfires and singing protest songs when state police opened fire on them with M-1 rifles, .38-caliber pistols, and shotguns loaded with .00 buckshot. Williams' personal account of his involvement in this protest endeavor and the aftermath of the massacre, taken from his notes compiled at the time, interjects a sense of harsh realism that can come only from one who has been a part of a tragedy such as this.

This explanatory commentary and excerpts from Williams' notes throughout the years humanize the Civil Rights story and reveal additional insight into the motivations of those involved in the movement at all levels. Ironically, this personal touch is the one small detail that also detracts slightly from the main point of the book. Williams begins his book with snapshots and background on himself and his life growing up in South Carolina. This has a tendency to give the book a slight family photo album feel at the beginning, causing the pace to drag a little until after the first chapter. However, the images and messages soon draw the reader into the heart of life in the Deep South of the 1950s and later.

Freedom & Justice reminds us of the contributions of nameless others who were striving to improve conditions for their race. Its value lies not only in the historical events it records, but also in the messages that Williams, as a participant and a journalist, provides. Williams' book has added faces to the scores of black individuals who endured hosings, beatings, incarceration, and numerous other atrocities in order to acquire racial equality.

Bernell Tripp, University of Florida

C.R. Wyatt, *Paper Soldiers: The American Press and the Vietnam War.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995. 272 pp. Paper, $14.95.

At some point during the war years, the majority of the American public turned against U.S. policy in Vietnam. As Stanley Karnow puts it, the domino that fell was public opinion. And the media were involved in Vietnam as in no other war. It is the nature of that involvement and its impact on the "hearts and minds" of the American public that is so often the focus of scholarly and popular work. Wyatt addresses this issue historically and concludes that

> it is difficult to maintain that the press was the profound, even decisive influence over public opinion and the course of the war that it has been portrayed to be. . . the whole fabric of American society — not just the press — determined how the war was fought, and a variety of influences played a part in its outcome.

Within the military public affairs community, William Hammond's *Public Affairs: The Military and the Media, 1962-1968* has been assigned reading. Hammond concludes that a major failure in Vietnam policy was that President Johnson and his advisors put too much faith in public relations. Hammond goes on to say that:

> During the peak years of the United States' combat involvement, the press and the government/military largely cooperated. And yet, within the military and the government, strong charges have been made regarding press coverage of Vietnam.

First, there is the assertion that Vietnam was uncensored — that information that jeopardized the cause, that publicized mistakes, and that impacted negatively on the military and the government was published. Wyatt points out, however, that "the maximum candor approach flooded the press with the information needed to report the daily story of Americans in combat." The Johnson Administration, Wyatt writes, "influenced significantly the picture of the war . . . For the most intense period of United States involvement in Vietnam, the interests of the press and the government complemented each other much more than they conflicted with each other." Wyatt also notes that as in the Persian Gulf, rules governed how and what reporters covered. The rules may not have been as strict, but did exist and the majority of the 600-plus accredited reporters abided by them.

The military and the government also charge that a second problem in Vietnam was the "host nation" situation and the determination of exactly what roles host nation sensitivities play in what is reported. Wyatt notes that American journalistic interest in Vietnam was directly related to American

involvement in combat. U.S. media outlets invested relatively little in foreign reporting. There was a definitive ethnocentric aspect of this approach to defining what is news. American media cared about Diem and his cohorts, but they cared much more about American soldiers. The war, for the most part, was perceived and defined as an American effort and the press tended to report it that way. The press also tended to treat Vietnamese officials as if they were American as well, often failing to grasp the cultural differences — but then, so too did the U.S. government.

A third concern expressed about media coverage of Vietnam is that of accreditation. At the height of the war — of U.S. involvement — more than six hundred media representatives were accredited. Of that six hundred-plus, however, it is estimated that only about sixty were working new people. The axiom in the military was that it took ten support personnel for each soldier in the field; it looks like the media operated the same way. As Wyatt reports, accreditation was fairly easy to obtain, requiring a passport, a visa, a letter of employment, and a valid shot record. One reporter represented a high school newspaper in Tennessee. Accreditation for reporters in Vietnam was political as well as practical, says Wyatt, but few requests were denied.

Finally, the question of the media-government-military relationship was brought to focus sharply in Vietnam. The media keep us free; they are a force to be reckoned with. At the same time they are driven by their perception of what is of interest to their audience. In Vietnam, Wyatt notes, it was journalism, not politics, that motivated reporters and their superiors back in the United States. The assumption that the media were at the center of blame — or credit — for what happen in Vietnam is simplistic. The Vietnam debacle was an extremely complicated story and an extremely important one. It was a story that resulted from and contributed to the Cold War as well later military ventures. Vietnam was fought at "full candor" from the battlefield, but at optimum cult secrecy from the White House. The executive branch can restrict and even manipulate information, and there is little the press can do about that. But they can report what they see, even when told it isn't really there, and that includes aircraft carriers on the Saigon river.

Wyatt's book is compelling and important. It is tightly focused, well documented and, effectively debunks the twenty-five-year-old myth that the press was directly related to the American failure in the country. I recommend it for anyone interested in the media's role in Vietnam as well as to military officers and government officials. We're all entitled to our opinions about the Vietnam War. This book presents well documented facts, however, that should serve to effectively revise the manner in which the media's role in Vietnam has been interpreted.

Oscar Patterson III, University of North Carolina at Pembroke

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